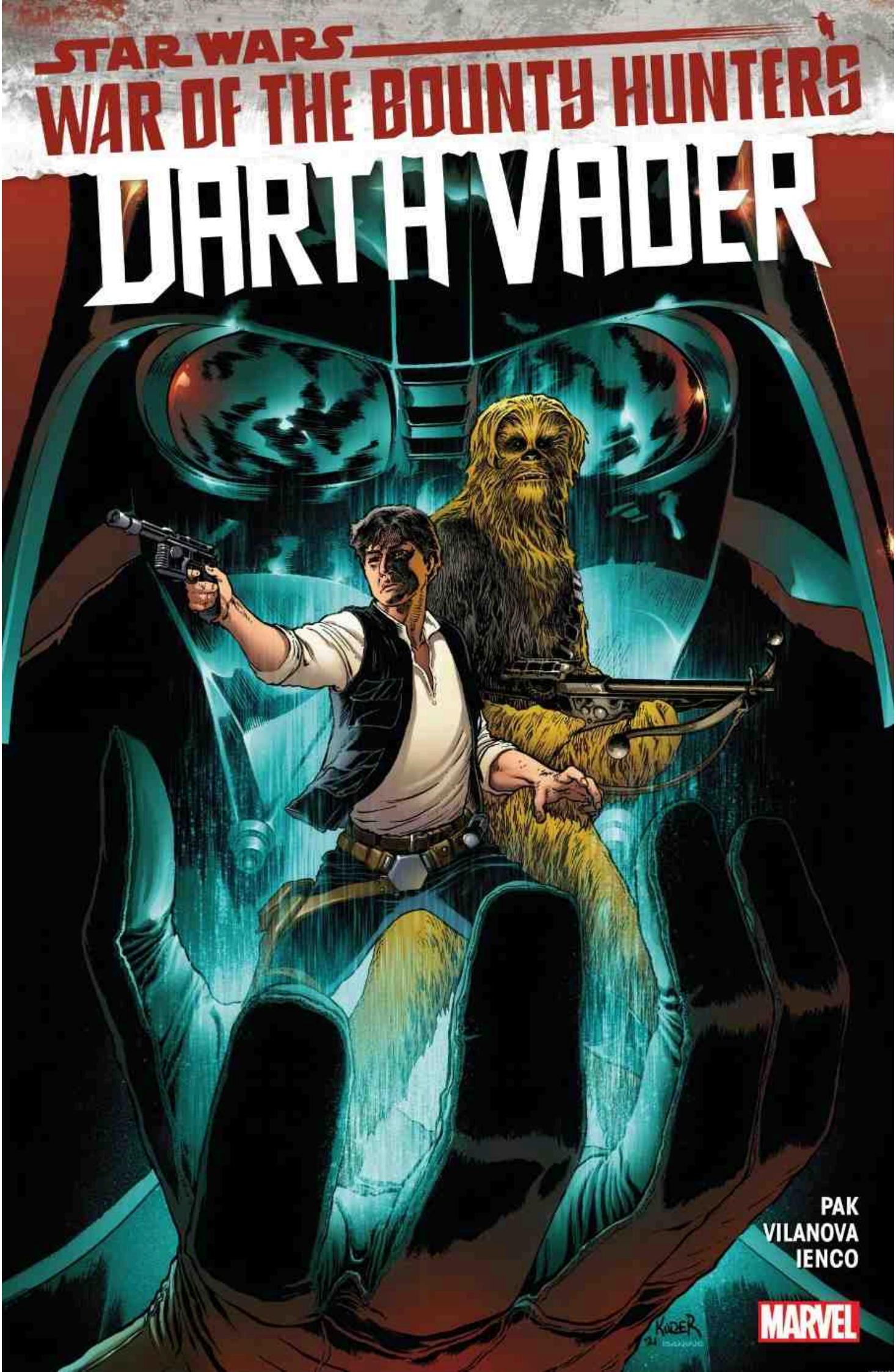
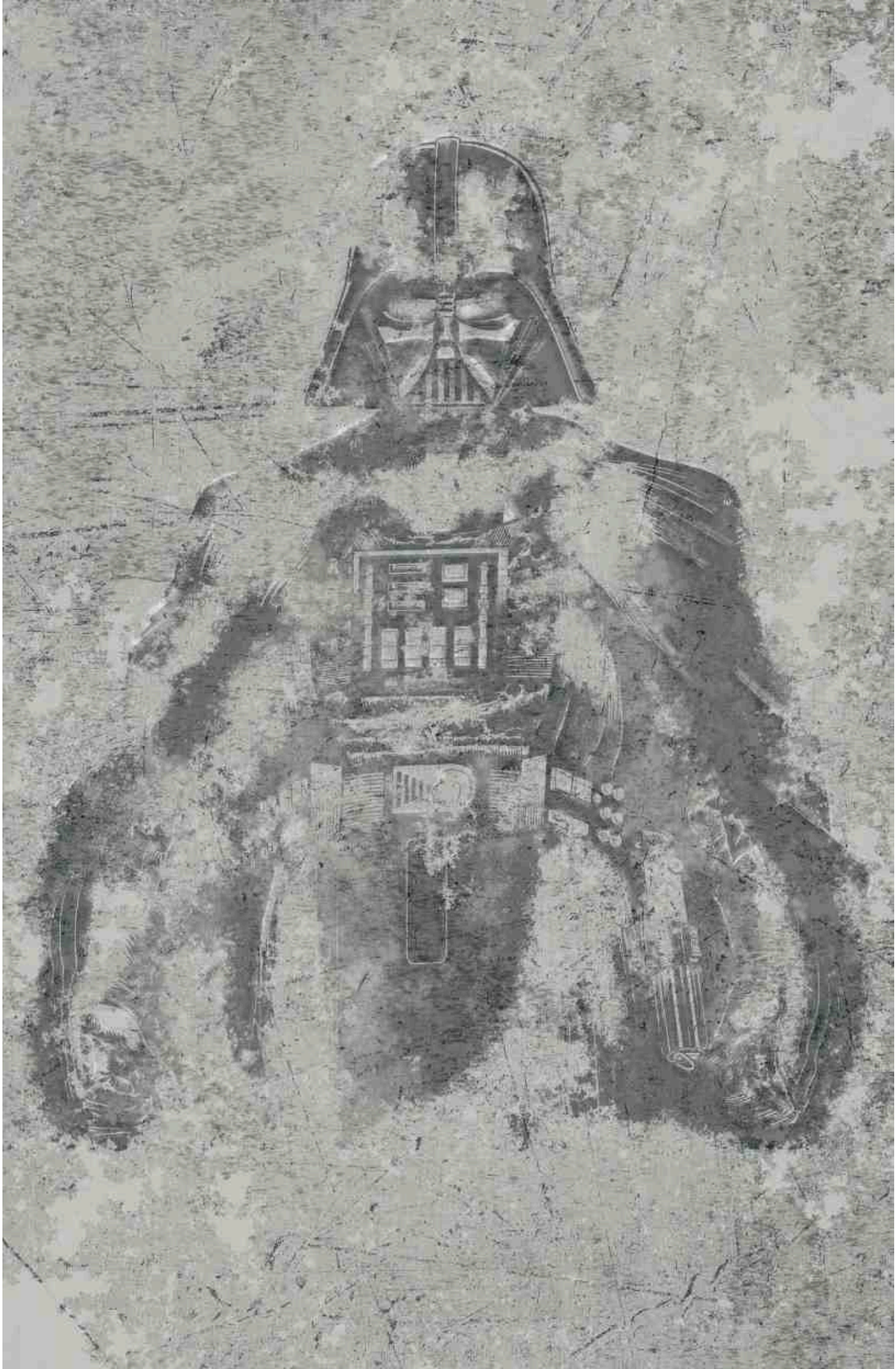

STAR WARS
WAR OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS
DARTH VADER
PAK
VILANOVA
IENCO
MARVEL

STAR WARS

WAR OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS

DARTH VADER



STAR WARS
WAR OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS
DARTH VADER

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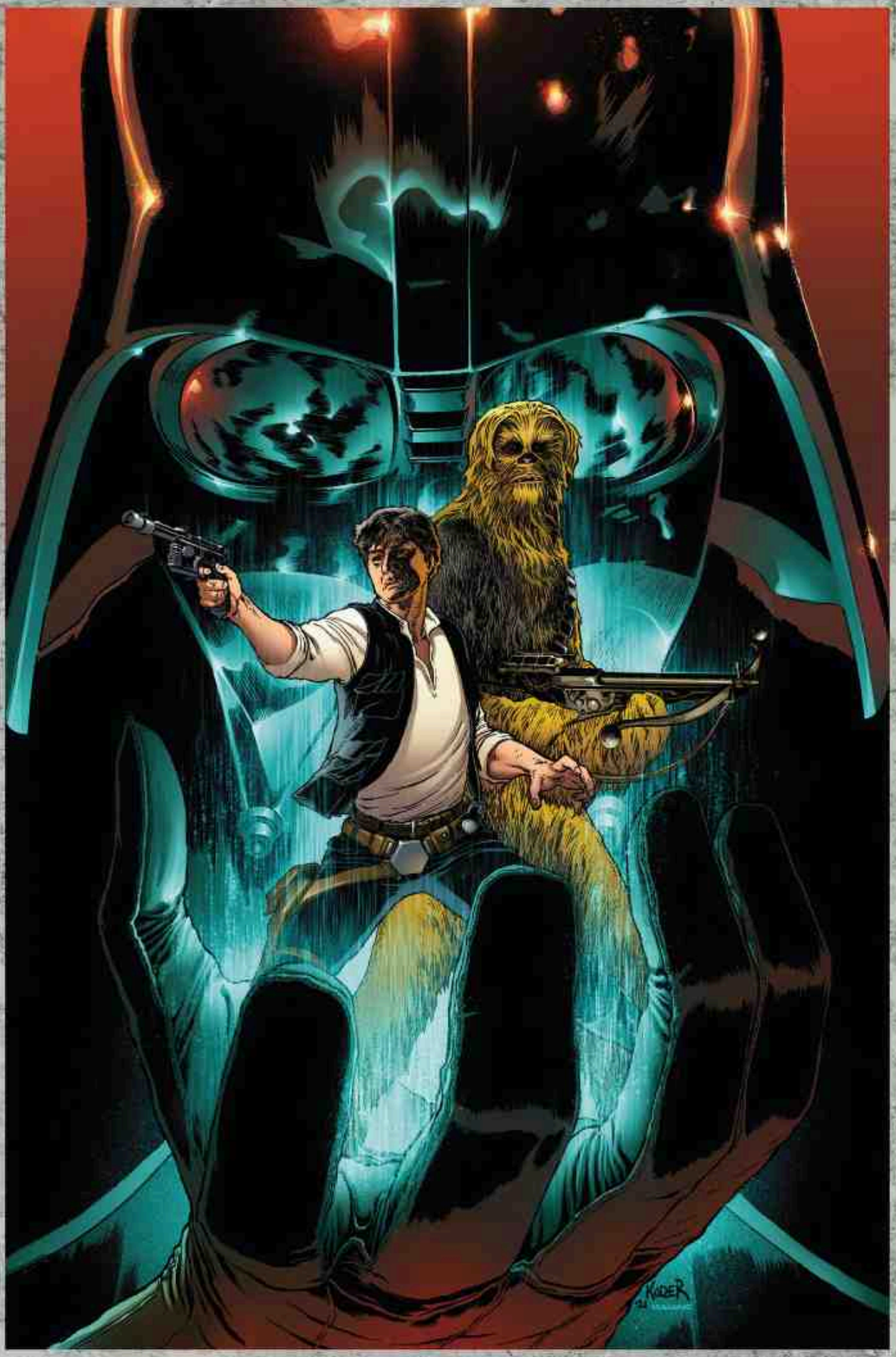


12 – INTO THE TRAP

WAR OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS

Emperor Palpatine finally revealed to Darth Vader a mere glimpse of his power on Exegol.

It was enough to make Vader kneel before his master once more.

Darth Vader is beginning to understand the full scope and might of the Emperor's plans for the galaxy. Now Vader's own plans must also change....

Coruscant.
MAKE WAY FOR THE RETURN OF LORD VADER!
OR WHAT'S LEFT OF HIM.
HOW IS HE EVEN ALIVE, ADMINISTRATOR?
HE IS A SITH, MAS AMEDDA.
HIS HATRED GIVES HIM POWER.

YOUR WILL, MY LORD?
RESTORE HIM. COMPLETELY.
YOUR EMINENCE... HE WANTED TO KILL YOU.
IF THAT HATE STILL DRIVES HIM...
ALMOST EVERYONE I HAVE EVER MET HAS WANTED TO KILL ME, GRAND VIZIER.
BUT I SHOWED MY AMBITIOUS APPRENTICE THE MIGHT OF EXEGOL.
HE KNOWS THE LIMITS OF HIS ROLE NOW.
NNNNHH!
TTZZZTT
ONCE I HAVE FIXED HIM...
...HE WILL FIND A MORE APPROPRIATE TARGET FOR HIS HATE.
HA HA!
SO CONCERNED!
DO NOT WORRY YOURSELVES.
I AM BEYOND HIS REACH. AND YOU ARE BENEATH HIS NOTICE.

HE WILL FIND HIS TRUE ENEMY SOON ENOUGH.
PREPARE FOR SHUTDOWN.
NO.
AS YOU WISH.

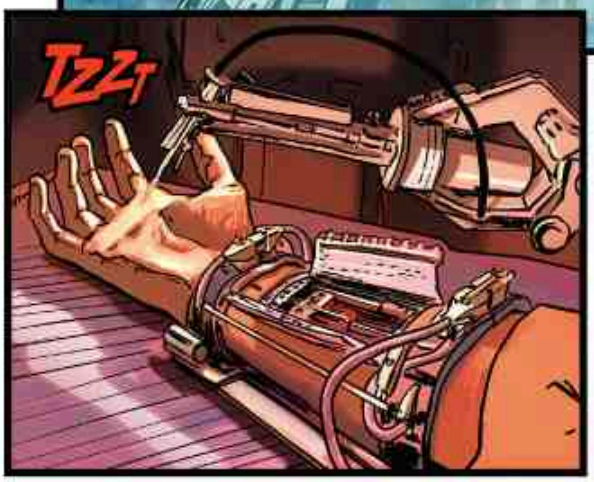
VZZZZZZZZZZ
SKRRRAAAAK
GRRRAAAAA!

Pain.

Like I gave to you, my son.

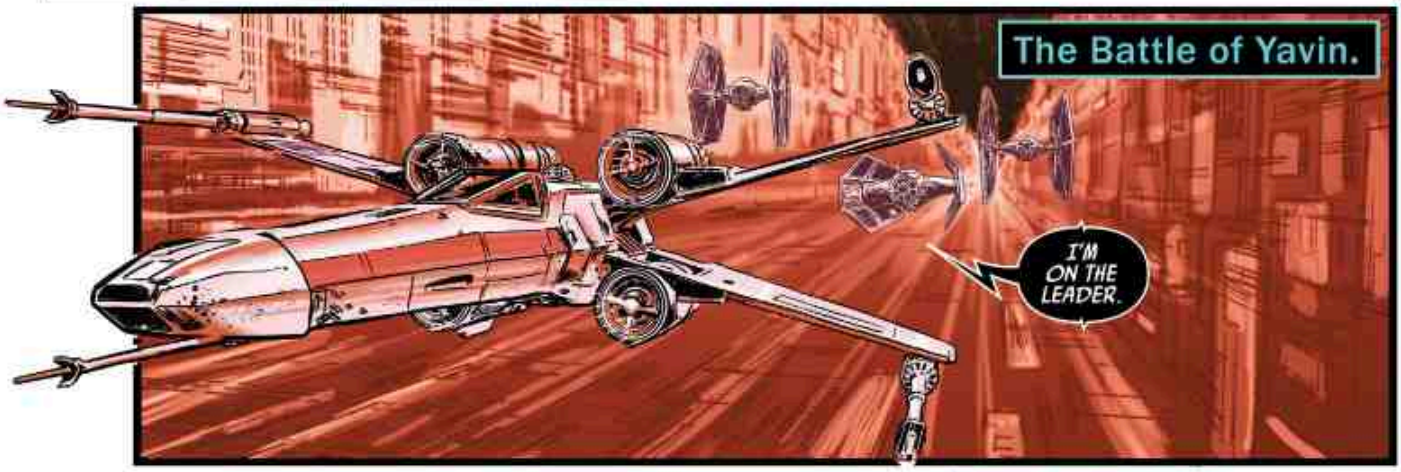
Did it lead you to *hate*?

Did it lead you to *power*?



NO.

You could have *ruled the galaxy* by my side.

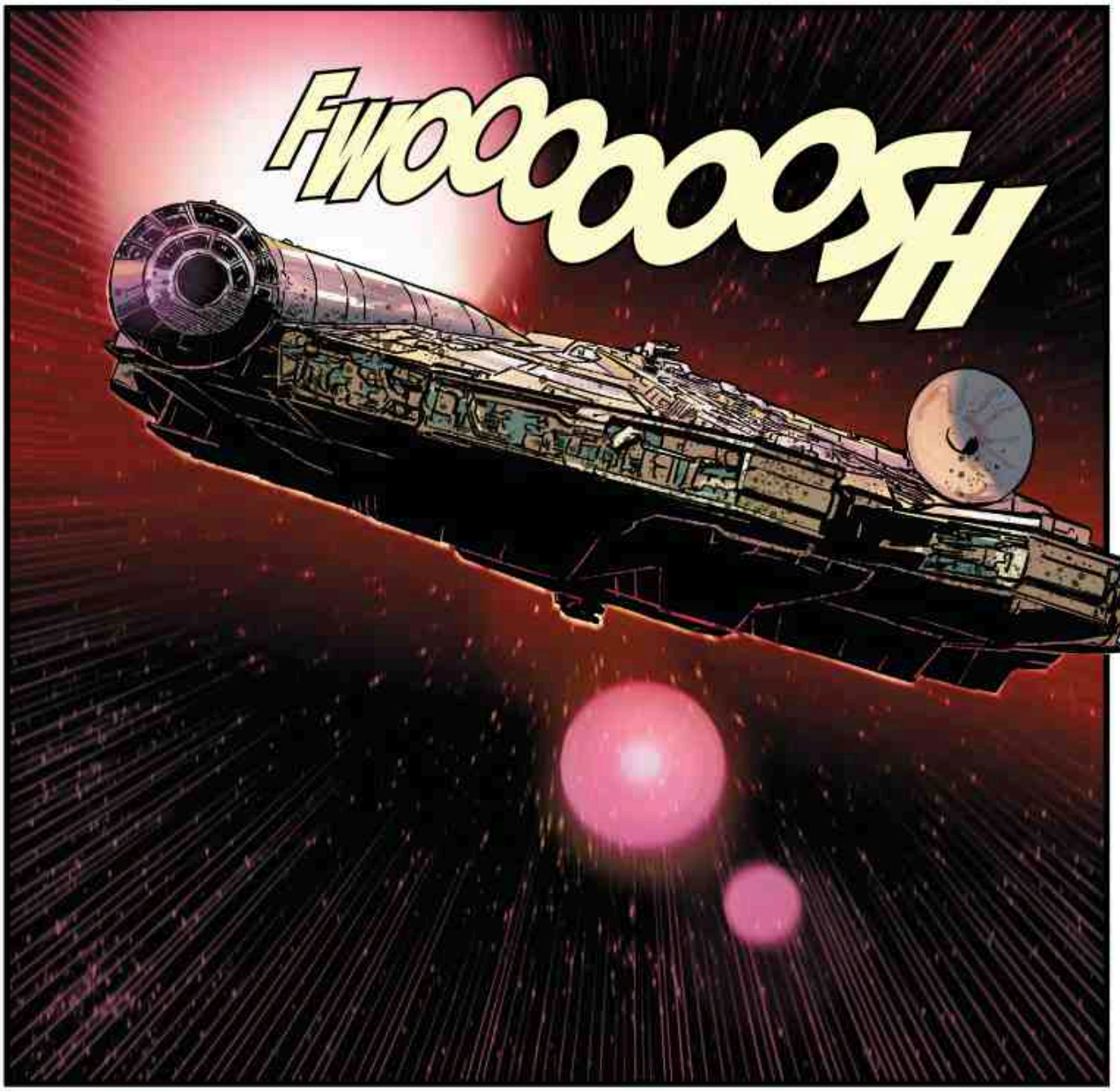


But despite all your *promise*...

...you're *weak*.

You have never done *anything*...

...without your *friends.*

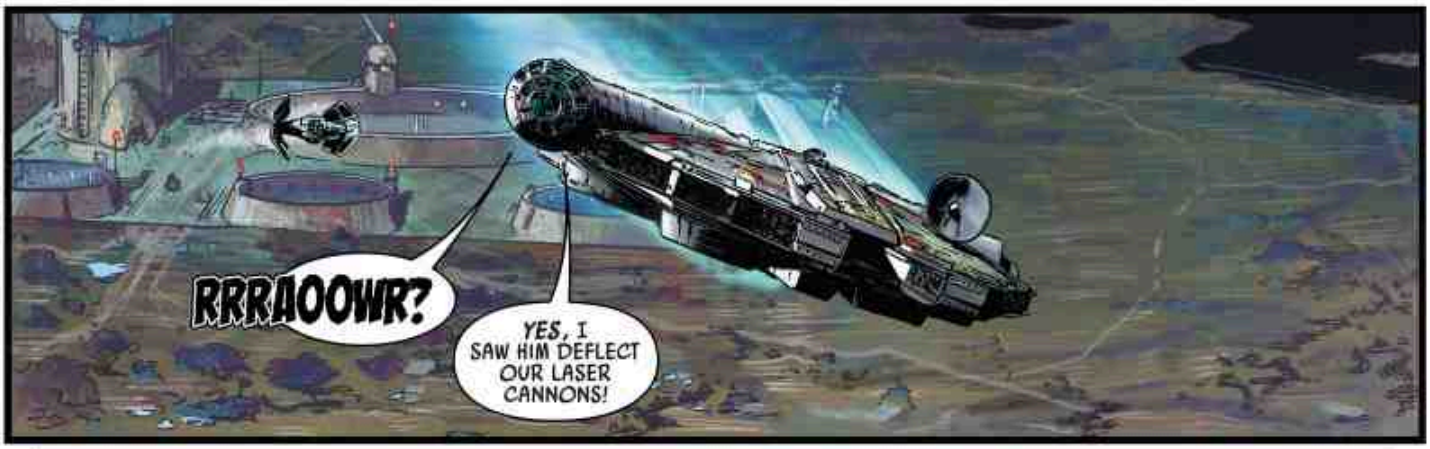


FRAAA

Corellia.
Some time later.
ALL RIGHT, SHE'S ALL FIXED UP!
LET'S GET OUT OF HERE BEFORE--
VNNNNNNNNNN
WHO THE--

SKRAKOW SKRAAKOW
AAAROOO?
YEAH, IT'S COMING FROM THE OTHER YT ACROSS THE--
OH NO.
YOU...
VADER...

VNNNNNNN
AROOOOOO!
I KNOW, CHEWIE!
THAT'S WHY WE'RE RUNNING!
VOOOOOOOM
SKRAAKOOW
SKRAKOWW

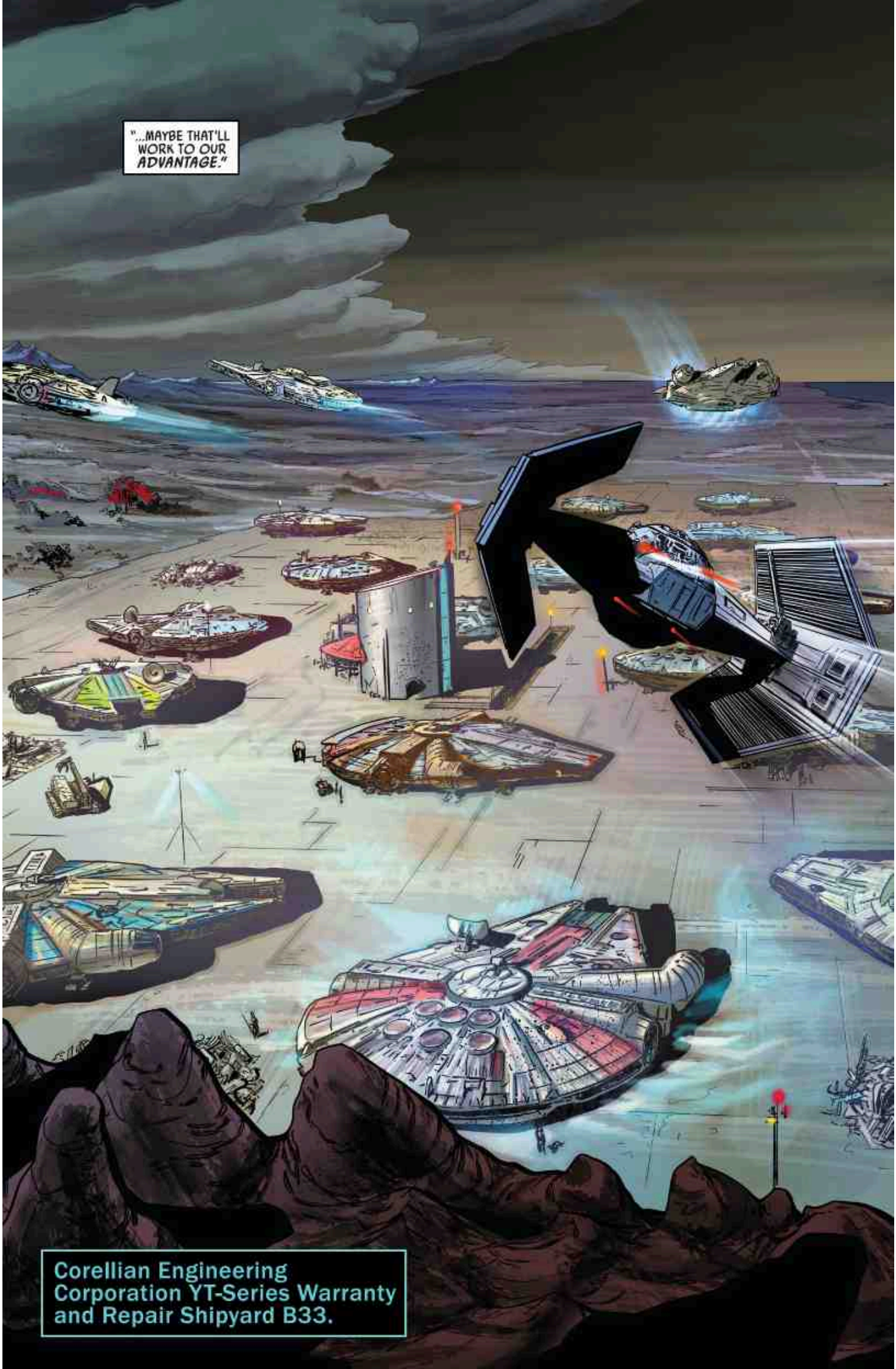

RRRAOOWR?
YES, I SAW HIM DEFLECT OUR LASER CANNONS!

ARRROOOOO!
YES, I KNOW THE HYPERDRIVE'S STILL BUSTED!

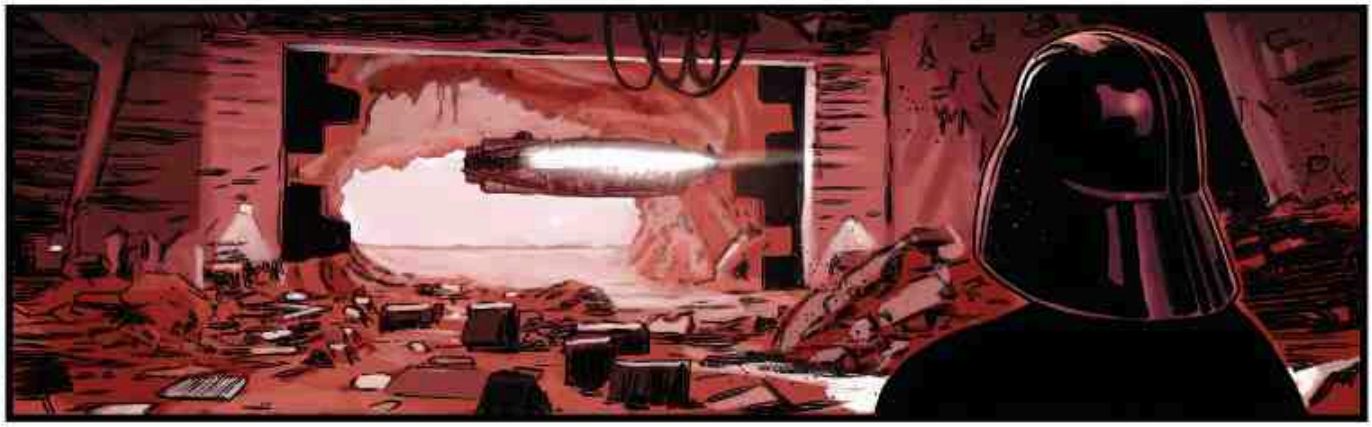
ARROUGH?
NO, I DON'T THINK WE CAN TAKE HIM!

WE'VE BEEN IN OVER OUR HEADS EVER SINCE LUKE BLEW UP THE DEATH STAR, CHEWIE.
LET'S FACE IT-- WE'RE A COUPLA NOBODIES HERE...

...BUT FOR ONCE...


"...MAYBE THAT'LL WORK TO OUR ADVANTAGE."
Corellian Engineering Corporation YT-Series Warranty and Repair Shipyard B33.

Later.
I'M TERRIBLY SORRY YOU WERE UNABLE TO FIND YOUR PARTY.
BUT I DON'T MIND TELLING YOU IT'S AN ENORMOUS HONOR...
...I CAN'T IMAGINE ANY YT-SERIES SHIPYARD HAS EVER HAD A VISITOR OF SUCH MAGNITUDE--
SILENCE.
THERE.
RIGHT! THAT'S HAN SOLO.
SOLO?
YEAH, LOCAL BOY, ACTUALLY. BUT YOU CAN'T SAY HE MADE GOOD.
JUST ANOTHER SCRUMRAT TURNED SMUGGLER.
HE CAN'T HAVE GOTTEN FAR. SHOULD WE--?
NO.
NO? IT REALLY WOULDN'T BE ANY TROUBLE.
VNNNNNNNN
IF LORD VADER SAYS NO--
--THE ANSWER IS NO!



Your friends.
You think they saved you.
You think you saved them.

THERE WILL BE A SUBSTANTIAL REWARD FOR THE ONE WHO FINDS THE MILLENNIUM FALCON.

"YOU ARE FREE TO USE ANY METHODS NECESSARY...
AAAAAAAGH!

"...BUT I WANT THEM ALIVE."
THEY DIDN'T EVEN ASK ME ANY QUESTIONS.

Good...
...keep on believing it...

...believe that you and your friends have survived this long through *strength* or *fortune*...

...instead of *my design.*

SKLAAANG
HNNN?
WHAT IS YOUR WILL, MY MASTER?
WHAT IS YOUR WILL, MY APPRENTICE?
YOU'VE SEEN THE SECRETS OF THE DARK SIDE.
YOU KNOW THE WAY OF THE SITH.
DECIDE FOR YOURSELF.

AH!
HA HA HA HA!
OCHI OF BESTOON.
M-ME?
MY LORD?
GO ON, ASSASSIN.
EVERYONE HAS THEIR ROLE TO PLAY.
WHERE... WHERE ARE WE GOING?
LORD VADER?

You could still be *strong*, my son.

I know there is *power* in you.

But I have seen the true *might* and *purpose* of the *Sith*.

And there is no room for *another*.

So this time...

...you will die.

Outer Rim.
<YOU WANT SOLO?>*
*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.
<SOLO WAS STOLEN.>
YOU MEAN JABBA LOST HIM.
<JABBA REMAINS STRONG. HE WILL RECOVER HIM. AND HIS POWER WILL INCREASE.>
NO, BOKKU...
...YOU WILL RECOVER HIM. AND GIVE HIM TO ME.
AND, LUCKY YOU, YOUR POWER WILL INCREASE.
<SO... STRANGE, OCHI OF BESTOON.>
<NONE OF MY REGULAR IMPERIAL CONTACTS HAVE SPOKEN TO ME OF THIS...FOOLHARDY PLAN.>
<ARE YOU CERTAIN THAT YOU SERVE THE EMPEROR?>
I SERVE POWER, BOKKU. SO TODAY...

...I SERVE VADER.
AS DO YOU.

13 – SOUND OF METAL

YOU CAN'T WIN, DARTH.
IF YOU STRIKE ME DOWN...
...I SHALL BECOME MORE POWERFUL THAN YOU CAN POSSIBLY IMAGINE.

So many Jedi tricks.
But I see now, old man.
You were talking about my son.
Your hope.
NO!
YES...
...HE WOULD BE A GREAT ASSET.

SKRRAAAKK
RRAAA!

I see everything now.
All your eyes...
...turn from me...
...to him.

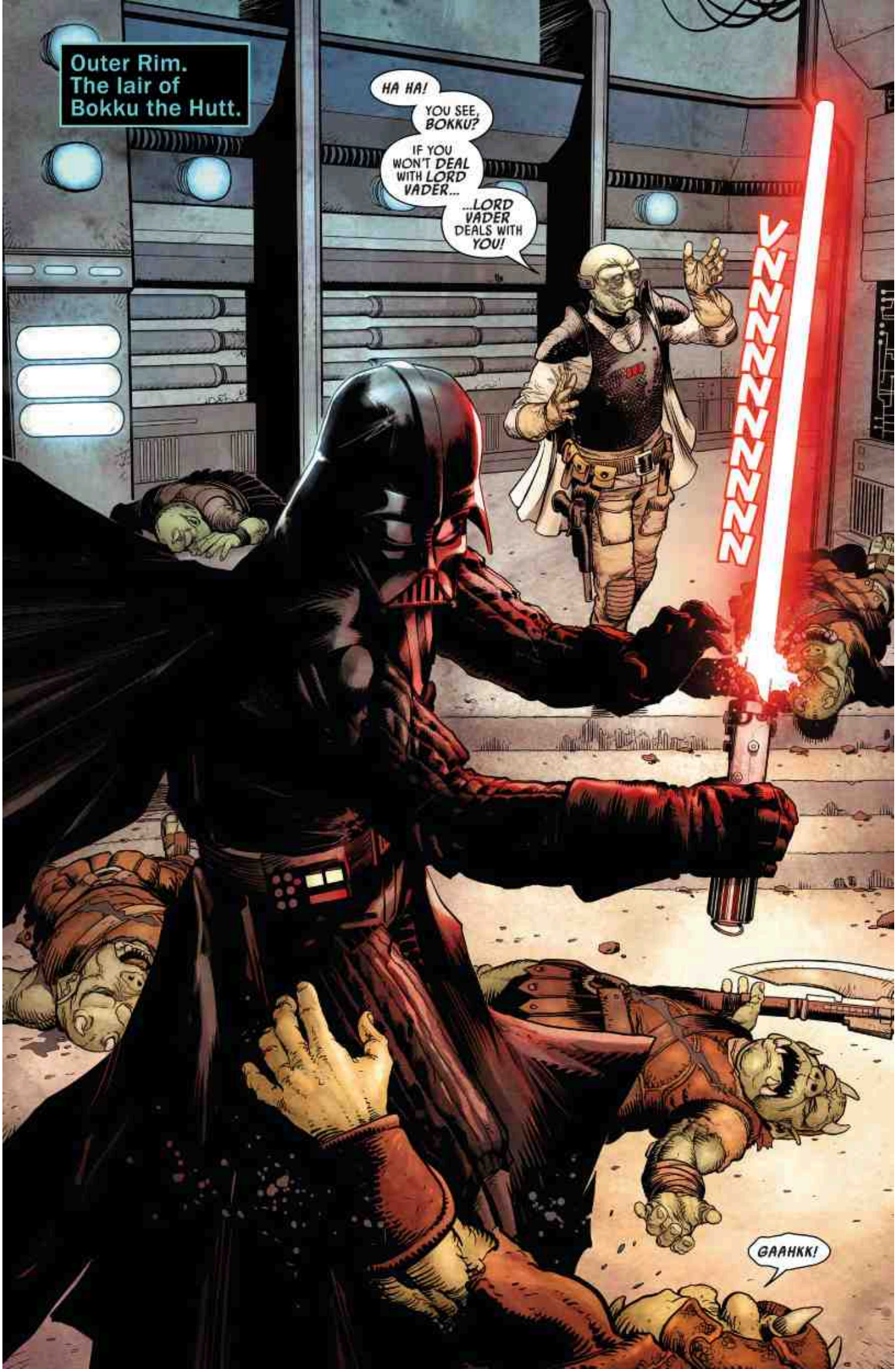
You think you see my *end*.

But I *endured* the *trial*.

And now I am more powerful than you could ever imagine.

I will *find* your *hope*...

...and I will *kill* it.


Outer Rim.
The lair of
Bokku the Hutt.
HA HA!
YOU SEE, BOKKU?
IF YOU WON'T DEAL WITH LORD VADER...
...LORD VADER DEALS WITH YOU!
VNNNNNNNNN
GAAHKK!

<AH! LORD VADER! MY APOLOGIES FOR NOT RECOGNIZING-->*
WHERE IS SOLO?
<I--I DON'T KNOW! I ALREADY TOLD OCHI--BOBA FETT LOST HIM!>
SO JABBA MUST BE LOOKING FOR HIM. WHO'S HE PUT ON THE JOB?
*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.
<JABBA LEADS THE HUTT COUNCIL.>
<YOU'RE... YOU'RE ASKING ME TO BETRAY MY OWN PEOPLE.>
COME ON, YOUNG BROOD! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE A GANGSTER!
AREN'T YOU READY TO STAB THAT SLUG IN THE FACE AND TAKE OVER THAT COUNCIL YOURSELF?
<AH...>
<...WELL...>
<...JABBA PUT OUT A BOUNTY. WE'VE BEEN TRACKING THE HUNTERS WHO BIT. MOST HEADED FOR FETT'S LAST KNOWN LOCATION...>
<...BUT A CREW OF DROIDS TOOK OFF IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION...>
WHERE?
<OH, I'LL TELL YOU!>
<BUT IT'S DEEP IN THE HEART OF HUTT SPACE...>
<...IF YOU SHOW UP IN AN IMPERIAL SHUTTLE, THEY'LL SCATTER LIKE WORRTS ON A HOT PAN.>
<BUT IF... WE TOOK MY BARGE...>
HA HA!
SOUNDS LIKE BOKKU WANTS TO DEAL AFTER ALL.
WHAT'S YOUR WILL, MY LORD?

<IT IS MY HONOR MERELY TO SERVE, LORD VADER...>
<...BUT AT YOUR LEISURE, PERHAPS WE COULD DISCUSS WHAT... RECOMPENSE I MIGHT-->
SILENCE.

YOU WILL BE REWARDED FOR YOUR SERVICES.
<TH-THANK YOU, LORD VADER.>
HUTT BARGE, IDENTIFY YOURSELF.
THIS IS NAV DROID GAK-SIXTOO, IN SERVICE OF BOKKU THE HUTT. SENDING CERTIFICATION NOW.
RECEIVED AND APPROVED. PROCEED.

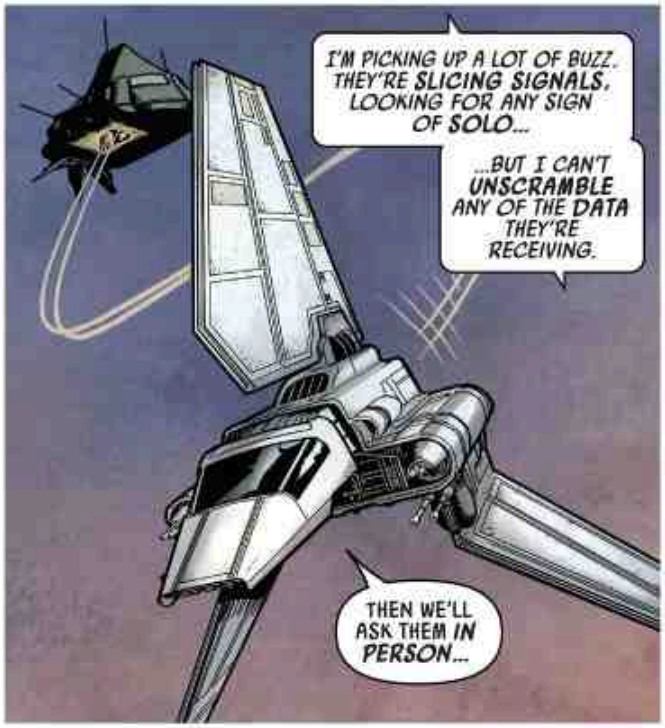
<OCHI...>
<...CAN VADER... BE TRUSTED?>
HE'S NEVER LIED TO ME.
<BUT...HE'S A SITH.>
THERE IS THAT...

...BUT YOU'RE A HUTT. YOU SHOULD KNOW HOW THIS WORKS.
THERE'S NO SAFE HAVEN ANYWHERE.
YOU JUST FIND THE BIGGEST MONSTER TO STAND BEHIND...
...UNTIL YOU'RE A BIG ENOUGH MONSTER TO--

AND HERE WE ARE!

ZEE-NINE CITY SEVEN...
...A DROID-RUN PIRATE REPAIR CENTER AND DATA HUB.

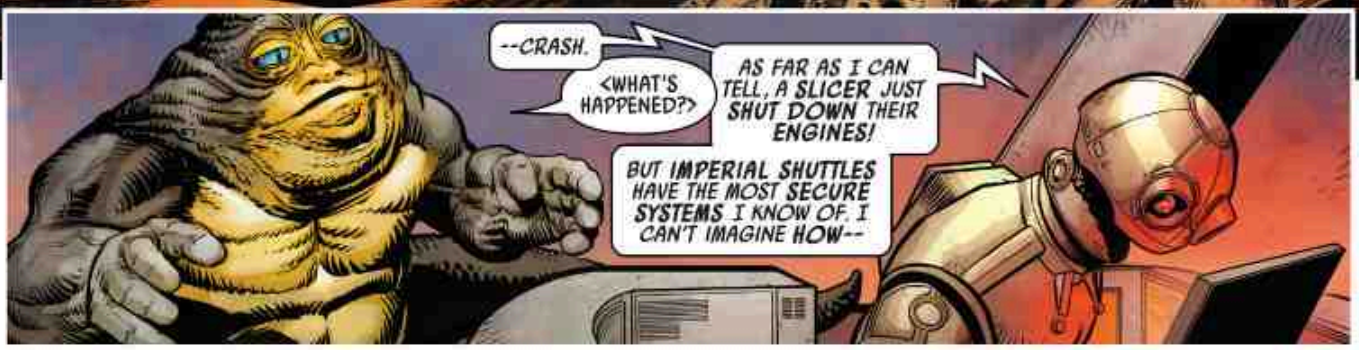
WHERE'S OUR TARGET?
WAIT, THE DROID CRUSH?
THOSE CHUMPS DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE IN FOR!
THE DROID CRUSH PARKED THEIR SHIP NEXT TO THE BIG ANTENNA--THE MAIN COMM BUILDING.
WHAT ARE THEY UP TO?


I'M PICKING UP A LOT OF BUZZ. THEY'RE SLICING SIGNALS, LOOKING FOR ANY SIGN OF SOLO...
...BUT I CAN'T UNSCRAMBLE ANY OF THE DATA THEY'RE RECEIVING.
THEN WE'LL ASK THEM IN PERSON...

...ONCE WE MAKE SURE THEY STAY PUT.
FTOOOM FTOOOOOM
HEY!

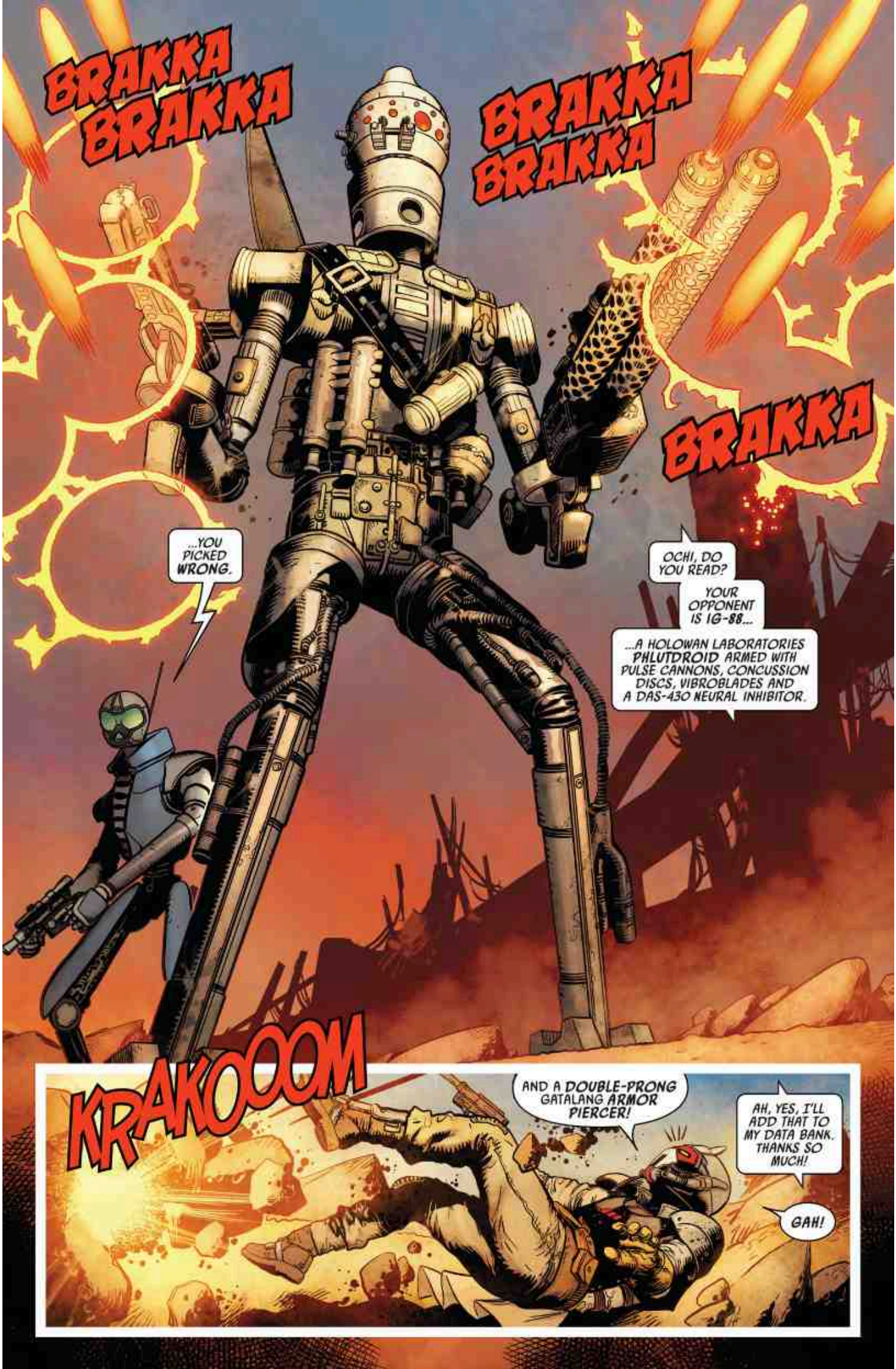
SKRAAAAKK
GAH!
WHAT THE--
GAK-SIXTOO, WHAT'S GOING ON?

OCHI! COME IN!
DO YOU READ?
YOU'RE GOING TO--
SKRREEEEEEEE
SKRAKRAAKCCC


--CRASH.
<WHAT'S HAPPENED?>
AS FAR AS I CAN TELL, A SLICER JUST SHUT DOWN THEIR ENGINES!
BUT IMPERIAL SHUTTLES HAVE THE MOST SECURE SYSTEMS I KNOW OF. I CAN'T IMAGINE HOW--

OCHI! YOU WORM!
HA! IT REALLY IS THE CRUSH! OR WHAT'S LEFT OF YOU!
YOU'RE WORKING FOR VADER NOW?
VEET
VEET
VEEET

BRZZAAAM
YOU LOSERS BLEW YOUR CHANCE TO KILL HIM BACK ON MUSTAFAR!
SO I PICKED THE WINNING SIDE!
VEET
VEET, VEET
POOR OCHI...


BRAKKA BRAKKA
BRAKKA BRAKKA
BRAKKA
...YOU PICKED WRONG.
OCHI, DO YOU READ?
YOUR OPPONENT IS IG-88...
...A HOLOWAN LABORATORIES PHLUTDROID ARMED WITH PULSE CANNONS, CONCUSSION DISCS, VIBROBLADES AND A DAS-430 NEURAL INHIBITOR.
KRAKOOOM
AND A DOUBLE-PRONG GATALANG ARMOR PIERCER!
AH, YES, I'LL ADD THAT TO MY DATA BANK. THANKS SO MUCH!
GAH!

SKRAAKK KRAAAK SKSSS
REPORTS INDICATE YOU RECENTLY SUFFERED STRUCTURAL COMPROMISE, LORD VADER.
I AM ENVISIONING AN ENJOYABLE OUTCOME TO THIS ENCOUNTER.
YOU CANNOT DEFEAT ME, DROID.
A STATEMENT OF OPINION.
BUT AS A MATTER OF FACT...
...YOUR MECHANICS WERE WRECKED BY YOUR OWN MASTER.
AND I REMAIN UNDAMAGED IN THIS MELEE.
FTOOM
FTOOM
YOU CONTINUE TO FUNCTION ONLY BECAUSE YOU HAVE INFORMATION I REQUIRE.
LAY DOWN YOUR WEAPONS.
SKRAAAAAAK
I AM NOT CURRENTLY IN YOUR EMPLOY, LORD VADER.
YOU WILL ONLY ACCESS THE INFORMATION I POSSESS BY DOWNLOADING IT FROM MY SEVERED HEAD.
SO BE IT.

SKRRAK
KRAAK
KRAAAK
SSSKRAK
SKRRAAANK
GAH!
CLICK
EEEEEEEEEEEE
SKKKKKKTTTT
AAARRR!
PERHAPS YOU RECALL MY MENTION OF AN ENJOYABLE OUTCOME?
WHAT THE--?

YAAH!
BRAKKA
BRAKKA BRAKKA
YOUR MASTER'S MECHANICAL PARTS ARE MORE SOUND THAN I HAD BEEN LED TO EXPECT, OCHI OF BESTOON.
BUT NOW I CONTROL THEM.
HNNN!
THAT'S--THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE!
VADER'S ARMOR SHOULD BE EVEN MORE IMPERVIOUS TO SLICING THAN THAT IMPERIAL SHUTTLE!
<AND YET...>
I PROPOSE A REVISED SCENARIO, LORD VADER...
HNNNN!
...IN WHICH I TAKE YOUR HEAD.
VNNNNNN

SHALL WE COMMENCE AN AERIAL BOMBARDMENT, SIR?
<OH, WELL, THAT DOES SOUND LIKE THE THING TO DO, DOESN'T IT?>

<LET'S GET RIGHT ON THAT...>

<...EVENTUALLY...>

WHO...
...GAVE YOU THE CODE...
...TO BREACH MY ARMOR?
SKKRRTTTKK

THE TERMS OF MY EMPLOYMENT PREVENT ME FROM SHARING THAT INFORMATION.
I CAN ONLY SAY THAT AS LONG AS I HOLD THIS CONTROLLER--

SKRRAAANCCH
AH!
HN.
CLICK
WELL...
EEEEEE
...THIS...
EEEEEE
...IS...LESS... ENJOYABLE.

BRAKOOOM
TCH.
AAH! DROID DOWN!
GO, GO, GO, GO!
BRZZZAM
BRZZZAM
BRZZZAM
VNNNNNNNNN
AGH!
<FIRE!>
THEY'RE ALL BUNCHED TOGETHER NOW! I CAN'T--
<FIRE!>

BRRAAAKOOOOOOOM
GAAAAH!

ALL RIGHT, ENOUGH FUN, YOU BOLT BUCKETS!
WHERE'S SOLO?

HA HA!
KILL YA NEXT TIME, OCH!!
BZZAAAM
CAN'T KRIFFING WAIT!

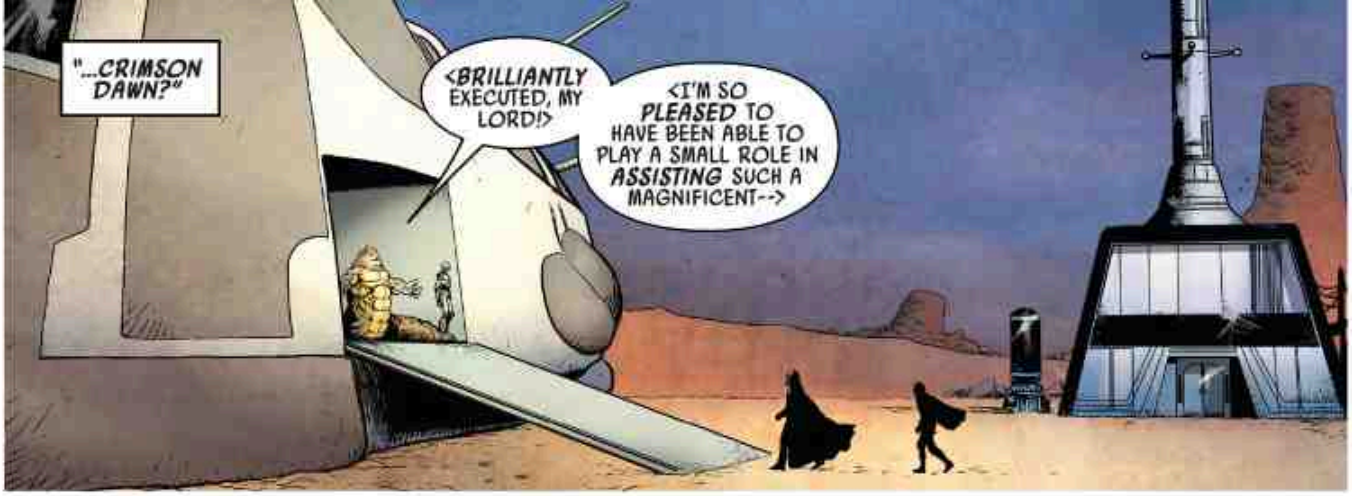
COME ON, MY LORD!
WE CAN CATCH UP WITH 'EM!
YOU JUST GOTTA...
REBUILD THAT SHUTTLE WING?

TING

OR... YEAH...WE CAN DO THIS...

HEY! THE DROID WHO USED TO HAVE THAT HAND--
--WHAT TERMINAL WAS HE USING?
OH MY!

RIGHT OVER THERE, SIR.
BLEEEP
WELCOME BACK, PHLUTDROID IG-88.
TCH. THOSE'RE JUST THE DEAD ENDS HE WAS CHASING.
NOTHING ABOUT SOLO'S CURRENT--
WAIT A MINUTE...
...ISN'T THAT...


"...CRIMSON DAWN?"
<BRILLIANTLY EXECUTED, MY LORD!>
<I'M SO *PLEASED* TO HAVE BEEN ABLE TO PLAY A SMALL ROLE IN *ASSISTING* SUCH A MAGNIFICENT-->
YOU PLANNED TO *BETRAY* ME FROM THE BEGINNING.
<LORD VADER!>
VNNNNNNNNNN
AND YET HERE YOU ARE.
WHEN YOU COULD HAVE *RUN AWAY.*
WHAT HAVE YOU *LEARNED?*
<YOU...>
<...YOU CANNOT BE DEFEATED.>
HA HA!
GOOD ANSWER!

Yes.

The only answer.

SO YOU FAILED.
YOU CLAIMED HE WAS STRUCTURALLY COMPROMISED.
I SAID HE WAS VULNERABLE.
AND I GAVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEEDED TO EXPLOIT THAT VULNERABILITY.

But there are still so many who must learn it.

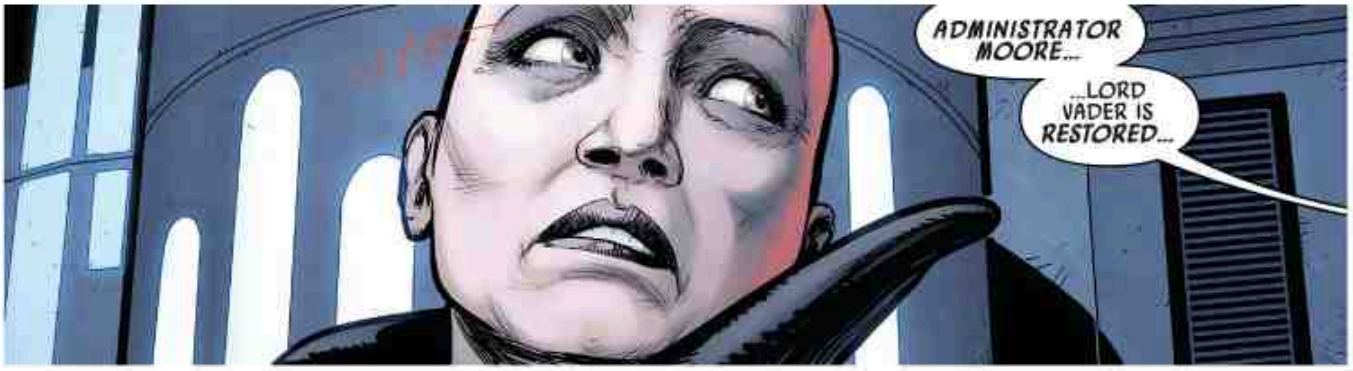
I AM MERELY ADMINISTRATOR MOORE...
...JUST ANOTHER CIPHER IN THE DARK, SCORNED AND FORGOTTEN.
BUT IF ALL OF US STAND TOGETHER...
...WE WILL BE MORE POWERFUL THAN THEY COULD EVER IMAGINE.

14 – THE BLADE BEHIND THE CURTAIN

Coruscant.
INCREDIBLE.
HE WAS WALKING AROUND WITH *THIS* JUNK...
...AND HE SURVIVED AN ATTACK BY A *SUMMA-VERMINOTH?*
THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY.

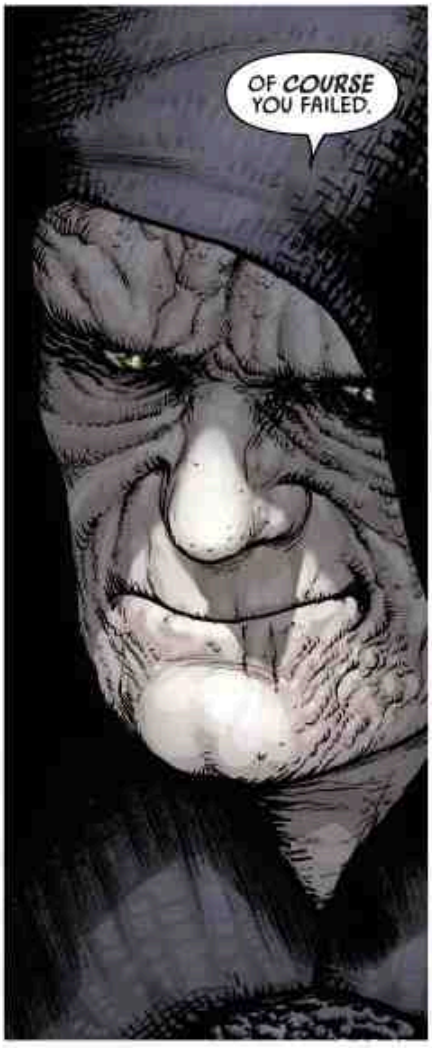
NOTHING CAN STOP HIM NOW.

HM.


ADMINISTRATOR MOORE...
...LORD VADER IS *RESTORED...*

...ARE YOU NOT DELIGHTED?
YOUR EMINENCE...

...I ACCEPT YOUR JUDGMENT.
YOU SENT ME TO DESTROY LORD VADER.
I FAILED.


OF COURSE YOU FAILED.

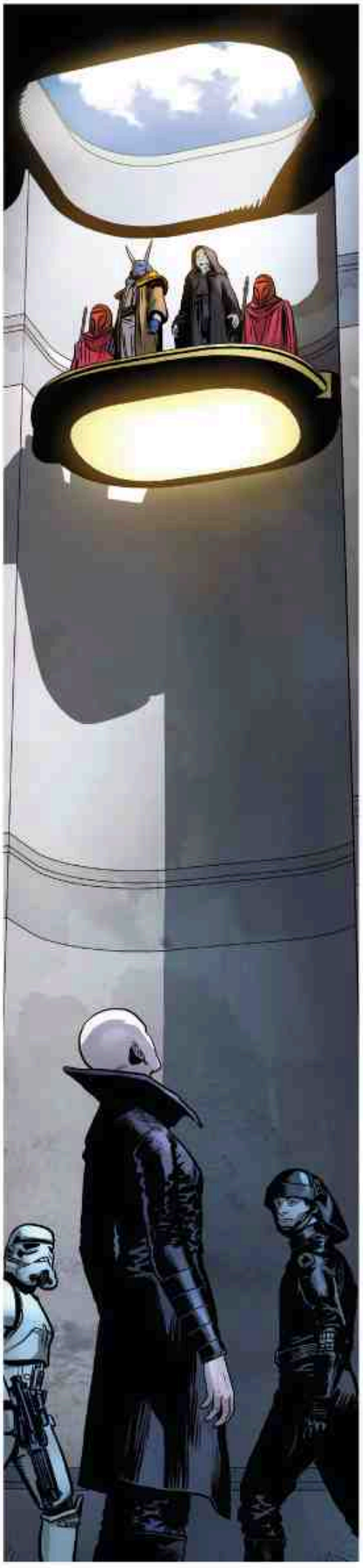
HA HA HA HA HA!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?

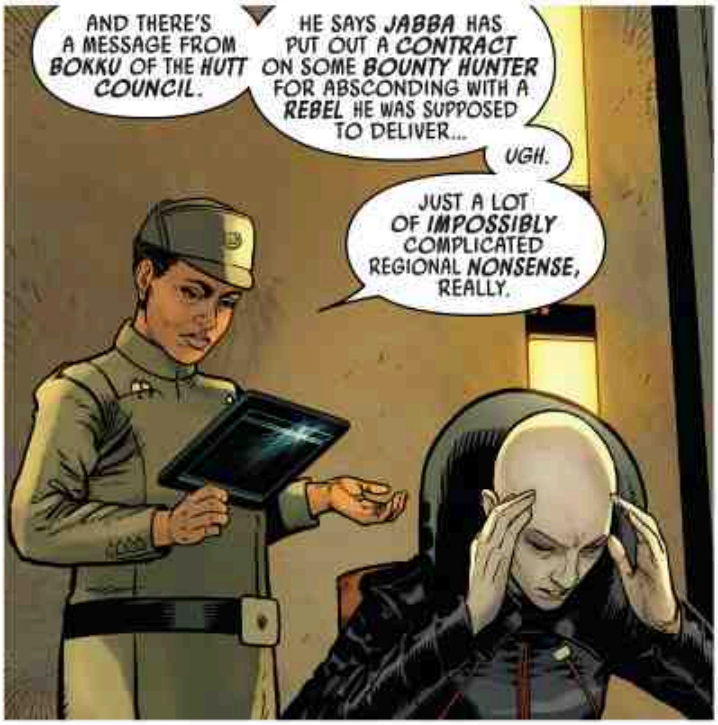
TO THE *PALACE*, GRAND VIZIER.
NO.
YOUR SERVICES ARE REQUIRED IN THE *PRESCREEN* DEPARTMENT.

THAT'S...
...THAT'S A TASK FOR A *SUB-* ADMINISTRATOR.

YES.
IT IS.



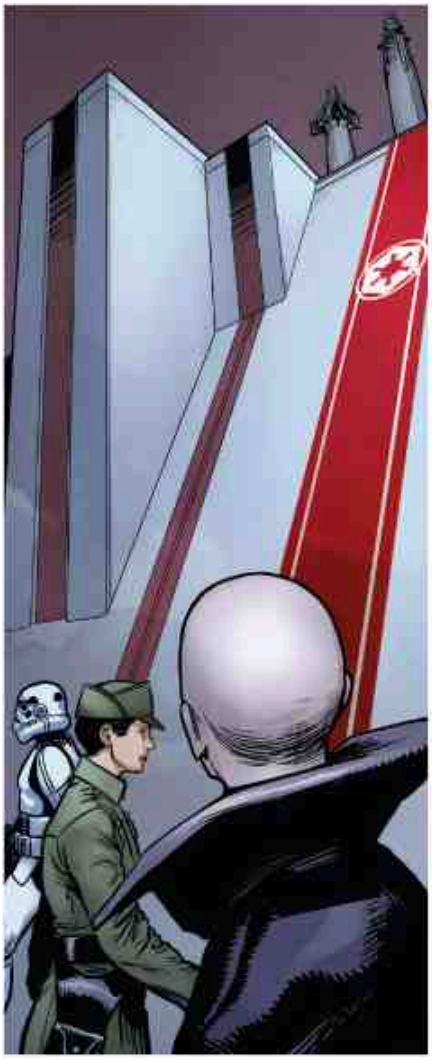
BESPIN GAS PRODUCTION IS STILL 17 PERCENT OFF PROJECTIONS.
WE RECOMMEND THAT GOVERNOR ADELHARD TIE RATIONS TO PRODUCTIVITY.
FINE.
THE NEW SOURCE ON LANZ CARPO HAS ISSUED THEIR FIRST REPORT.
VERY POOR PUNCTUATION.
WE RECOMMEND A REQUEST TO REDRAFT.
FINE, FINE.

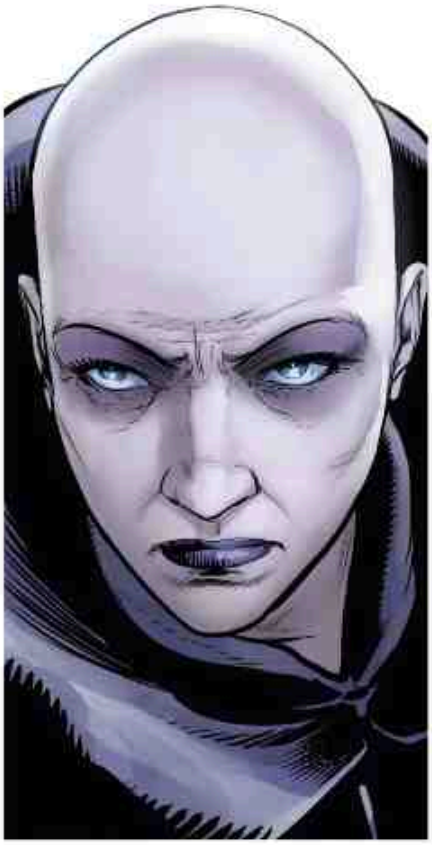

AND THERE'S A MESSAGE FROM BOKKU OF THE HUTT COUNCIL.
HE SAYS JABBA HAS PUT OUT A CONTRACT ON SOME BOUNTY HUNTER FOR ABSCONDING WITH A REBEL HE WAS SUPPOSED TO DELIVER...
UGH.
JUST A LOT OF IMPOSSIBLY COMPLICATED REGIONAL NONSENSE, REALLY.

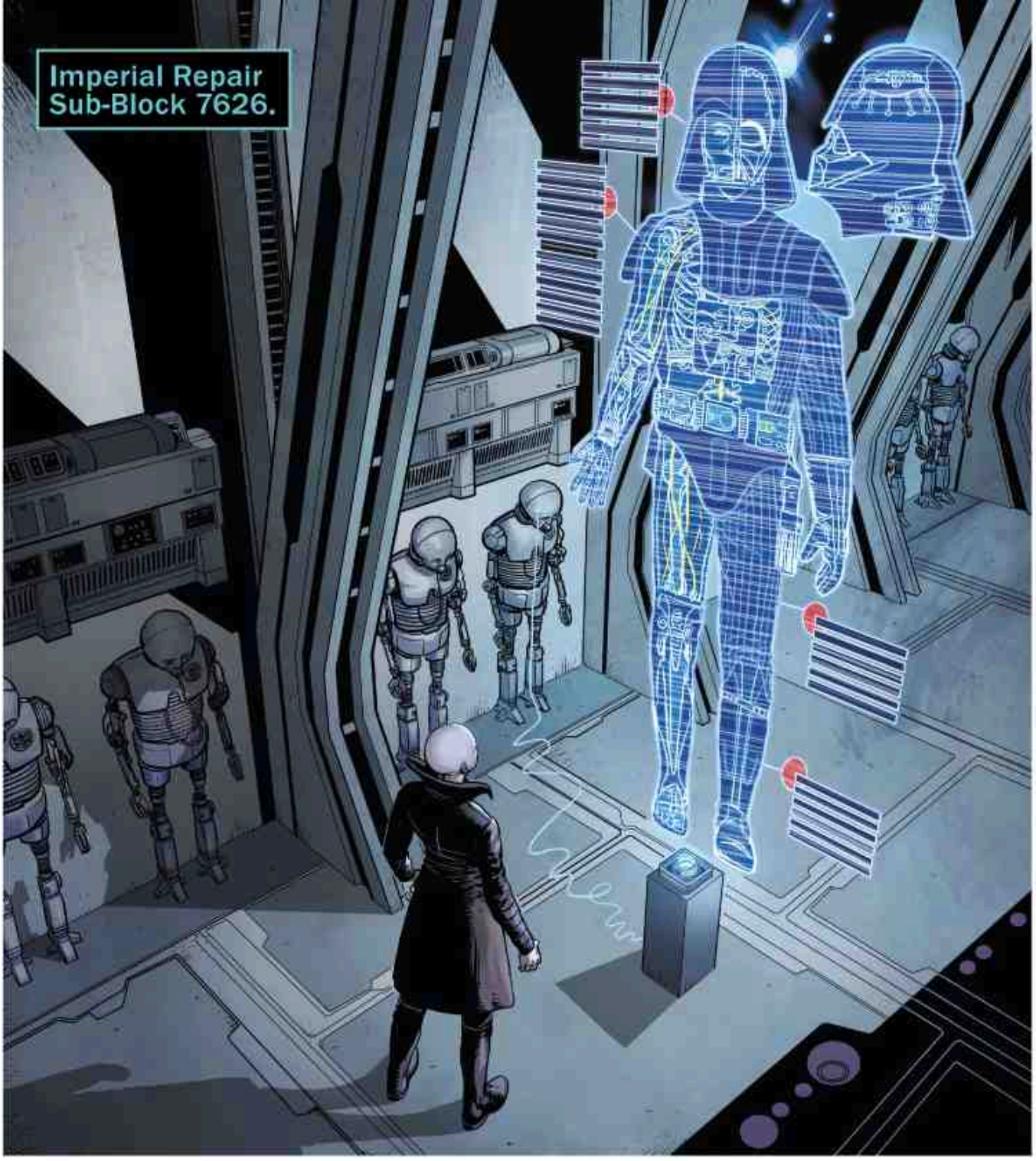
BUT THIS REBEL SEEMS TO HAVE SOME CONNECTION WITH A HIGHER-VALUE REBEL NAMED...
SKYWALKER.
RIGHT.

MEANWHILE, GENERAL ROMODI RECEIVED A GRANDIOSE INVITATION FROM A CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION CALLED CRIMSON DAWN TO AN EVENT WHERE THIS FIRST REBEL WILL SUPPOSEDLY BE DELIVERED TO US.
WE'VE DETERMINED SIMILAR INVITATIONS HAVE BEEN SENT TO OTHER PARTIES, SO IT'S OBVIOUSLY GOING TO BE A RIDICULOUS AUCTION.
WE RECOMMEND SENDING IT TO INTELLIGENCE--
WAIT.

SKYWALKER?



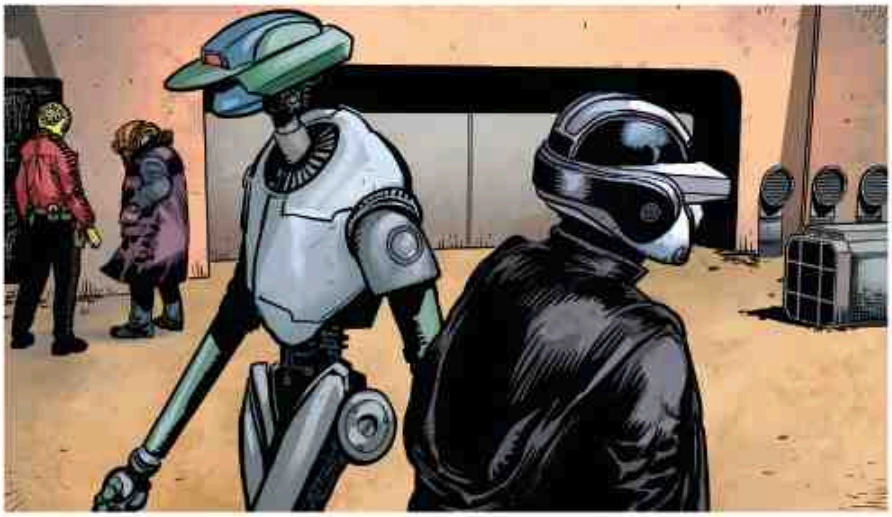


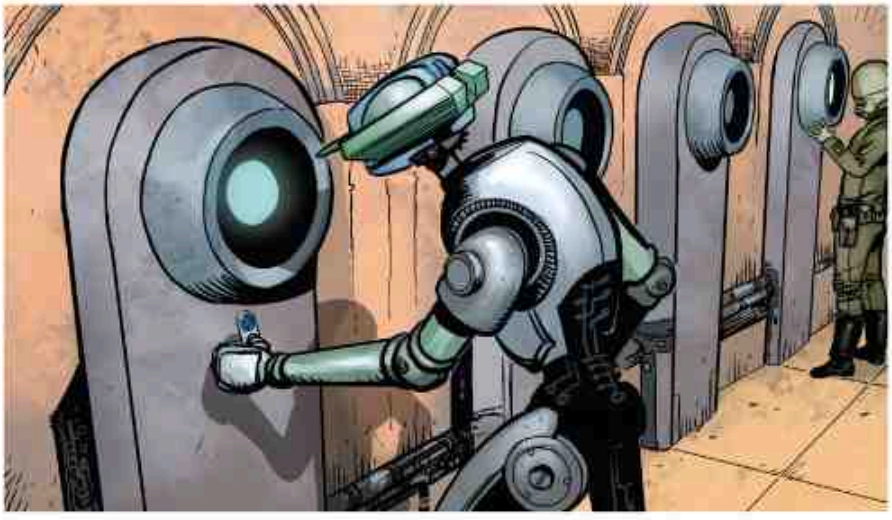

Imperial Repair
Sub-Block 7626.

HN!

WHAT NEED DOES A SUB-ADMINISTRATOR OF THE COURT HAVE TO VIEW THE SPECIFICATIONS OF LORD VADER'S ARMOR?

LIKE YOURSELF, GRAND VIZIER, I AM INVESTED IN THE SUCCESS OF THE EMPEROR AND ALL HIS PLANS.
I MERELY SEEK ASSURANCE THAT LORD VADER'S RESTORATION IS COMPLETE.
I CERTAINLY HOPE YOU ARE NOT ATTEMPTING TO USE YOUR FAMOUS FACILITY FOR INFLUENCE AGAINST A HIGHER-RANKING OFFICIAL.
OH, IS THAT NOT PERMITTED?
I THOUGHT THE SITH DESTROY THE WEAK.
THE EMPEROR GLORIES IN IT.
WE ARE NOT SITH.
WE MERELY SERVE THEM.
WE DO NOT HAVE THE POWER TO INDULGE IN THEIR PLEASURES.
I'M SURE THAT'S RIGHT FOR YOU, AMEDDA.
A PITY.
GO ON, THEN...
CLICK
...AND REMEMBER NONE OF THIS.
YES, YES... OF COURSE...





RECEIVED.

Administrative Temple Garden 313A.
ADMINISTRATOR, YOU CALLED--
WAIT--
--YOU SAID WE WOULD SPEAK ALONE.
WHA--?!
THIS...THIS IS MADNESS!
WE CAN'T BE SEEN TOGETHER!
ADMINISTRATOR--
ENOUGH.
WHY DOES IT SCARE YOU...
...TO KNOW THE STRENGTH OF YOUR NUMBERS?
EACH OF US MUST STAND FOR ALL OF US TO RISE--
HNNNNNNNNNN

REPEAT:
VADER CANNOT BE DEFEATED.

I AM TERMINATING OUR AGREEMENT.
IG-88. YOU FOUGHT HIM BY YOURSELF, DIDN'T YOU?
I DEPLOYED YOUR PROVIDED SLICE AND DISABLED HIS ARMOR.*
BUT HIS ABILITIES TRANSCEND TECHNOLOGY.
*SEE DARTH VADER #13!

YOU WERE GREEDY AND FOOLISH, AND YOU FOUGHT HIM ALONE.
WHAT WILL IT TAKE TO TEACH YOU?

ALL OF YOU.
SO MUCH FEAR.

OUR ENEMIES ARE STRONG.
BUT TRUE POWER WORKS THROUGH A MILLION HANDS.

SKRRAANCH
MAYBE...

GAKK!
VNNNNNNNNNNNN
...BUT HE ONLY NEEDS TWO.

IT'S--IT'S VADER!
RUN! INTO THE TEMPLE!
WE'RE-- WE'RE ALREADY DEAD!

PULL YOURSELF TOGETHER!
BUT--
LOOK--

THERE! ALL THE WAY THROUGH, TO THE STREET--

SKLAAAANG
OH, NO...

VNNNNNNNN

OH YES.
CLICK

SSSSSSSKKKKTTTTTTTTT
NOW!
WHILE HIS ARMOR'S FROZEN!

A MILLION HANDS!

YAAAAAAAAAAAA!

SKRAAAKKTTT
GAAAH!

CLICK
CLICK
CLICK

IG-88 ALREADY USED THAT TRICK, UMBARAN.
DID YOU THINK LORD VADER WOULDN'T HAVE FIXED THAT VULNERABILITY?

NO MATTER.
YOUR MASTER WAS ONCE MERE FLESH...

...HE HAS GREATER WEAKNESSES THAN ANY MACHINE.
HHNN...

GAH!
NNNNNNNNNN

I AM A SITH.
YOU CANNOT BEND MY WILL.
I--I WOULD NEVER PRESUME, LORD VADER.
I MERELY WANTED TO SEE IF YOU WERE STILL PLAGUED...
...BY FEAR.

THE ONLY FEAR IN THIS PLACE IS YOURS.
Y-YES.
I AM AFRAID.
YOU COULD KILL ME... EFFORTLESSLY.
...BUT THAT WOULD DO NOTHING TO SAVE YOU...

...FROM SKYWALKER.
WHAT...
...DO YOU KNOW OF SKYWALKER?

ONLY HE CAN DISPLACE YOU IN THE EMPEROR'S FAVOR.
HE'S WEAK.
HE WILL DIE.
IF HE WOULD DARE FIGHT YOU...

...BUT WHAT GOOD IS ALL YOUR STRENGTH...
...IF YOU CANNOT FIND HIM?

SOLO IS THE KEY.
SKYWALKER'S FRIEND, FROZEN IN CARBONITE.
SKYWALKER WILL FOLLOW HIM WHEREVER HE GOES.

AND NOW SOMEONE'S SELLING SOLO.
BUT IF YOU TRY TO SECURE HIM, THE EMPEROR WILL KNOW OF YOUR PLANS.
ON THE OTHER HAND, IF I SECURE HIM FOR YOU...

YOU SENT THE PHLUTDROID TO KILL LORD VADER.
YOU STILL WANT HIM DEAD.
WHY SHOULD MY MASTER TRUST YOU?

THE ONLY PERSON WHO COULD KILL LORD VADER NOW...
...IS SKYWALKER.
I WOULD BE DELIGHTED TO BRING THEM TOGETHER.

HA HA HA HA HA!
SO BE IT, UMBARAN...

Jekara.
The *Vermillion*,
Fortress-Flagship
of Crimson Dawn.
"GO TO THIS *AUCTION*...
"...BID FOR *SOLO*.
"BRING HIM TO *ME*..

"...AND YOU WILL *SEE* IF YOU GET WHAT YOU *WANT*."

<TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND CREDITS.>*
* TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.

<TWO HUNDRED AND *FIFTY* THOUSAND.>

<THREE HUNDRED.>
<FOUR HUNDRED.>
<ONE *MILLION* CREDITS.>

I THOUGHT YOU WERE GOING TO *DO* SOMETHING! WE CAN'T JUSTIFY SPENDING OVER A *MILLION CREDITS* ON A SINGLE PRISONER!
HA HA HA!

WHERE ARE YOU GOING?!
OCH!! A *WORD?*

NONE OF THIS MAKES ANY SENSE!
BOKKU THE HUTT SERVES VADER--
YOU FIGURED THAT ONE OUT, HUH? I GUESS YOUR FINGERS THING IS GOOD FOR SOMETHING.
WHY WAS HE BIDDING AGAINST ME?

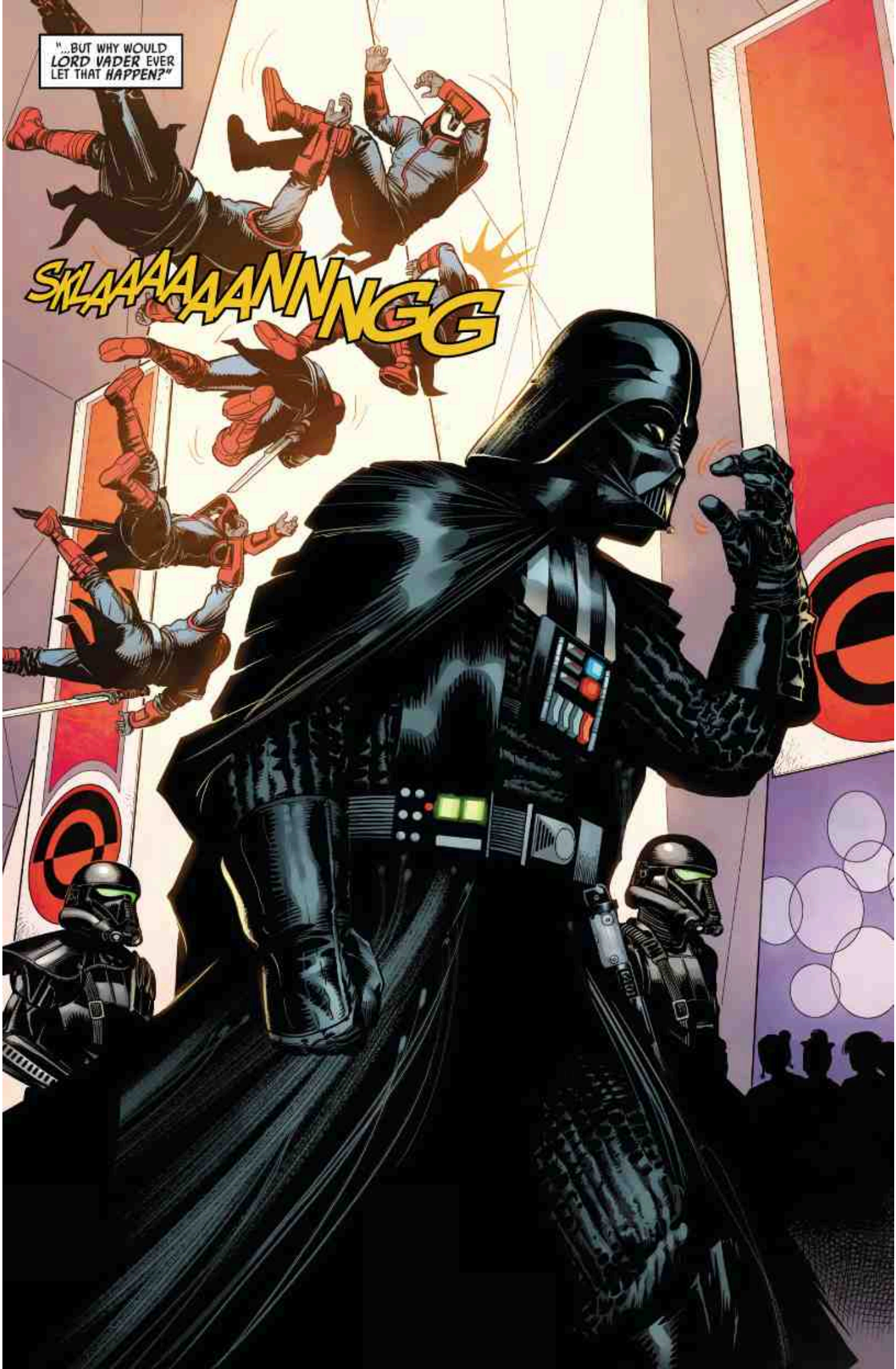
TO HUMILIATE YOU, OF COURSE.
AND HIMSELF AT THE SAME TIME.

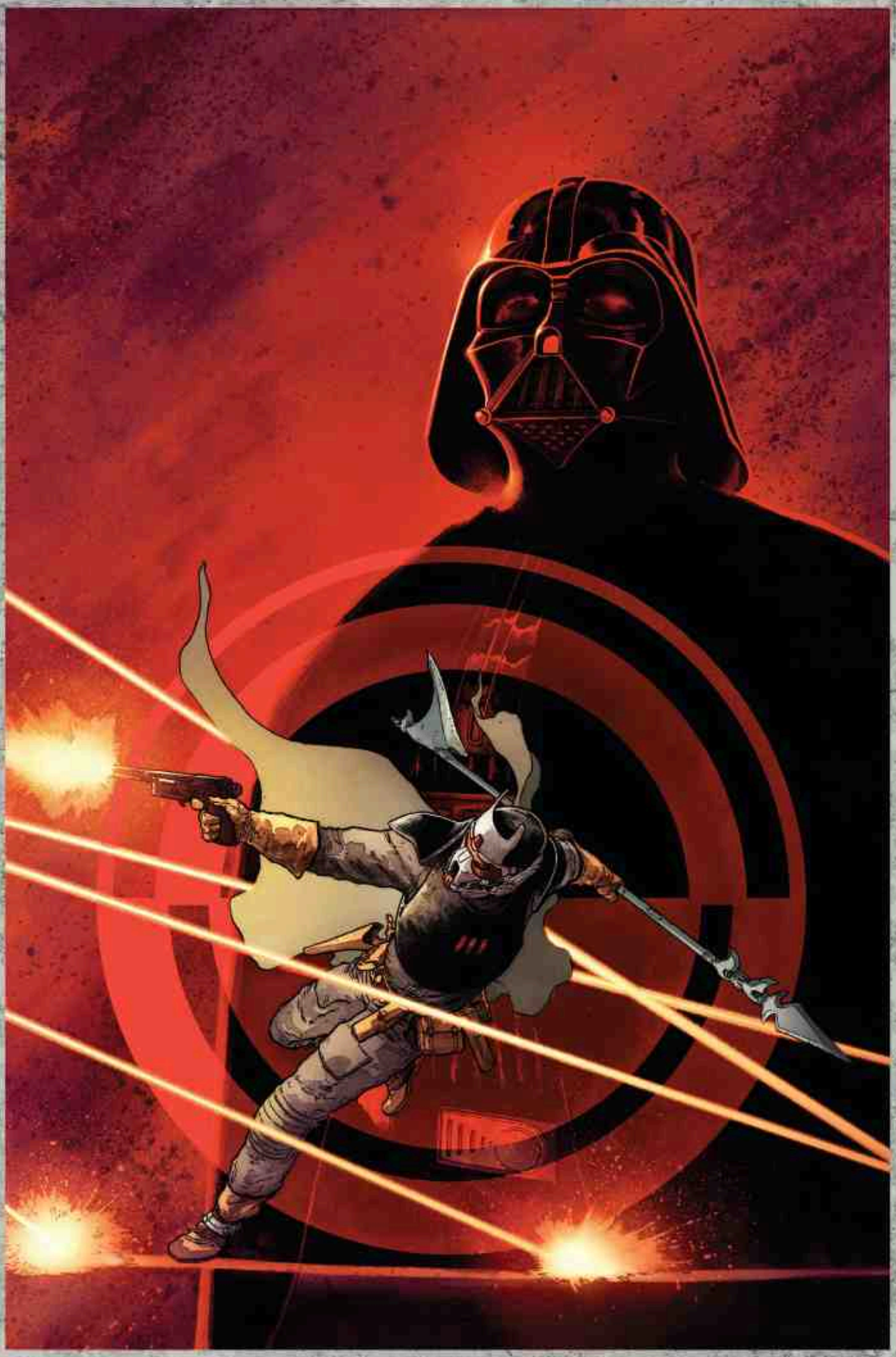
NOW THE EMPEROR WILL SEE YOUR WEAKNESS EVEN MORE CLEARLY.

AND JABBA WILL SEE BOKKU'S BETRAYAL.

BUT WHY?
VADER NEEDS US!
AH, YOU STILL DON'T GET IT.

I'M SORRY. THE IMPERIAL CONTINGENT HAS ALREADY ARRIVED, AND I DON'T HAVE ANY RECORD OF ADDITIONAL GUESTS FOR THE AU--AH-- AAAAHCCK!
"YOU WERE REALLY ONLY RIGHT ABOUT ONE THING, UMBARAN.
"IF YOU WORMS COULD ONLY UNITE, YOU'D BE SO POWERFUL...


"...BUT WHY WOULD LORD VADER EVER LET THAT HAPPEN?"
SKLAAAAAAANNNGG



15 – THE ASSASSIN'S CHOICE

Arkanis.
The Outer Rim.
ALL RIGHT, I'M OUTSIDE.
LOOKS LIKE THE WHOLE GANG'S DOWN THERE.

I'LL SNEAK AROUND THE BACK AND SEE WHAT I CAN FIND OUT.
NO.
NO?

YOU SERVE ME NOW.

WALK IN THE FRONT DOOR.
UH...

ALL RIGHT, THEN...

SO THAT'S IT, HUH?
YEAH. THEY SAY HE CAN BE ALL OURS. ONLY QUESTION IS IF WE CAN TRUST--

SKLAAANG
WHAT THE--?!
I'M OCHI OF BESTOON!

SKRAAAKK
GAH!

YOU'RE DEAD, YOU PUNK!
EVENTUALLY!
BUT TODAY...

...I SERVE VADER.

VADER?
SKRAAK
ALL RIGHT, THEN.
MAYBE ONE OF YOU CAN TELL ME WHAT ALL THE FUSS IS...
...ABOUT THIS?
NAB

Outer Rim. The lair of Bokku the Hutt.
<LORD VADER...>
<...SO DELIGHTFUL TO SEE YOU AGAIN SO SOON. I HAVE NEWS-->*
SAVE IT, SLUG. JUST TELL US--
*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.

--YOU RECOGNIZE THIS?
<Y-YES. IT'S AN INVITATION FROM CRIMSON DAWN...>
<...TO COLLECT THE FROZEN BODY OF HAN SOLO.>
SO YOU GOT ONE TOO. WHEN WERE YOU GOING TO FILL US IN ON THAT LITTLE FACT?

<I WAS JUST ABOUT TO. JABBA WILL SOON REGAIN POSSESSION OF SOLO.>
<WITH ALL THE RESOURCES OF THE EMPIRE, IT SHOULD BE A TRIVIAL MATTER TO PURCHASE HIM.>

SO YOU THINK CRIMSON DAWN'S JUST GONNA GIVE HIM UP, HUH?
<A GESTURE OF GOODWILL, THEY SAID-->
COME ON. THEY SENT THE SAME INVITE TO A BUNCH OF OTHER SYNDICATES.

THEY'RE GONNA AUCTION SOLO TO THE HIGHEST BIDDER.
<WHA...>

YOU WILL ATTEND THIS AUCTION.
<AH... YES...>
YOU WILL BID AGAINST JABBA...
<WH-- WHAT?>

...AND YOU WILL BE HUMILIATED.
<I...FAIL TO UNDERSTAND THE STRATEGY HERE.>
YOU ARE WEAK, BOKKU.
YOU CANNOT DEFEAT JABBA THROUGH STRENGTH.
YOUR ONLY HOPE IS TO BECOME EVEN WEAKER...
...SO THAT HE WILL LOSE ALL FEAR OF YOU.
THEN YOU CAN STRIKE.

LIKE A COWARD IN THE DARK.
HA HA!

=GULP=

<BUT A VICTORIOUS COWARD, EH?>

HA HA HA! DID YOU SEE HIS FACE?
SO WHAT'S THE PLAN ONCE WE GET SOLO? WE'RE REELING IN SKYWALKER, RIGHT?
SILENCE.

BOKKU WAS TOO EASY TO CONVINCE.
OH YEAH.
LITTLE WORM WANTS THE THRONE.
JUST NEEDED A NUDGE.

NO.
HE WAS ALREADY PLANNING TO BETRAY JABBA.
BUT HE WOULD NOT DARE DO IT ALONE.

AAAGH!
LORD VADER!

I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE THINKING, BUT--
LORD VADER!

GAH!

WHAT--
WHAT--?
GO.
THUMP
BUMP

FIND OUT WHO ELSE BOKKU IS WORKING WITH.
AH... RIGHT...OF COURSE.

WAIT, HOW-- HOW WILL I REACH YOU AGAIN?

DO NOT TROUBLE YOURSELF WITH THAT.
I WILL FIND YOU.

GULP

<WE'LL SEE YOU NEXT FESTIVAL!>
<BRING MORE OF THOSE CAMPOU GOURDS, HUH?>
<HA HA! ABSOLUTELY!>

THUMP
THUDD

THOKK
THOKK
GAH!

HEY. JUST WANNA TALK.
THEN WH-- WHY'D YOU KILL HIM?
OH, I'M NOT LOOKING FOR A WHOLE COLLOQUIUM.
JUST YOU AND ME.
WELL, THAT'S GONNA BE A LITTLE TRICKY.
BECAUSE WHEN YOU MESS WITH BOKKU...

...YOU MESS WITH ALL OF CRIMSON DAWN.

CRIMSON DAWN?
RIGHT. GREAT.
THAT'S VERY HELPFUL.
JUST WANTED TO PUT A NAME TO IT.

SEE YA 'ROUND!
BRRZZAAM
BRRZZAAM

BRRZZAAM
VEET VEEEET VEEET VEEET
HUP!
BRRZZAAM BRRZZAAM
HA!
UFF. FINE.
IF YOU MESS WITH ME...

...YOU MESS WITH DARTH VADER!
HAHAHAH

COME ON.
I JUST KILLED FOUR OR FIVE OF YOU.
EVEN ODDS I COULD TAKE OUT THE REST OF YOU MYSELF.
SURE...
...MAYBE YOU COULD KILL A DOZEN OF US.
BUT COULD YOU TAKE A HUNDRED?
A THOUSAND?

MILLIONS?

EACH OF US IS WEAK.
BUT TOGETHER...
...WE ARE IMPOSSIBLY STRONG.

WELL. I STILL ONLY SEE TEN OF YOU.

LET'S DO THIS.

NO, OCHI OF BESTOON.
DON'T FIGHT US.
JOIN US.

WH--
WHAT?
HNN.

MY LORD IS COMING.
SURRENDER OR DIE.

WHA--

WHAT THE...?

HE'S NOT HERE TO SAVE YOU, OCHI.
HE'S HERE TO TEST YOU.

JOIN US.
THERE IS NO OTHER WAY.

BRRZZZAAAM

UNNGH!

VEET VEEEET
VEEET VEEET

THUKK

BRRZZAAM BRRZZAAM
GAH!
UKK!
VEET VEET VEET
GAH!
I'LL TAKE THAT!
AAGH!
CHUKK
BRRZZAAM BRRZZAAM
VEET VEEEET VEEET VEEET

WHEW!

NNNGH...

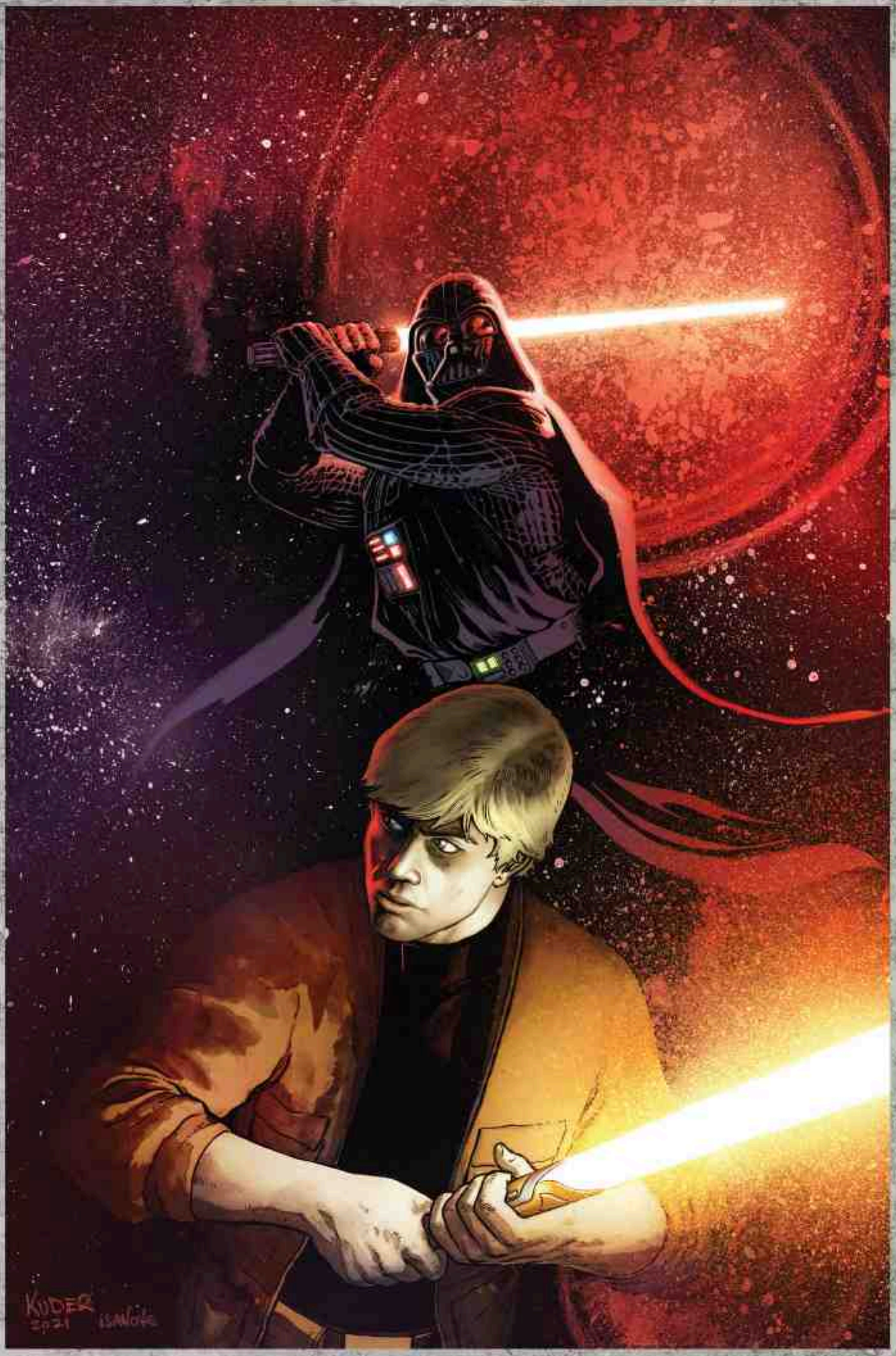
HRRRNN...

LORD VADER.
BOKKU...
...BOKKU'S WORKING WITH CRIMSON DAWN.

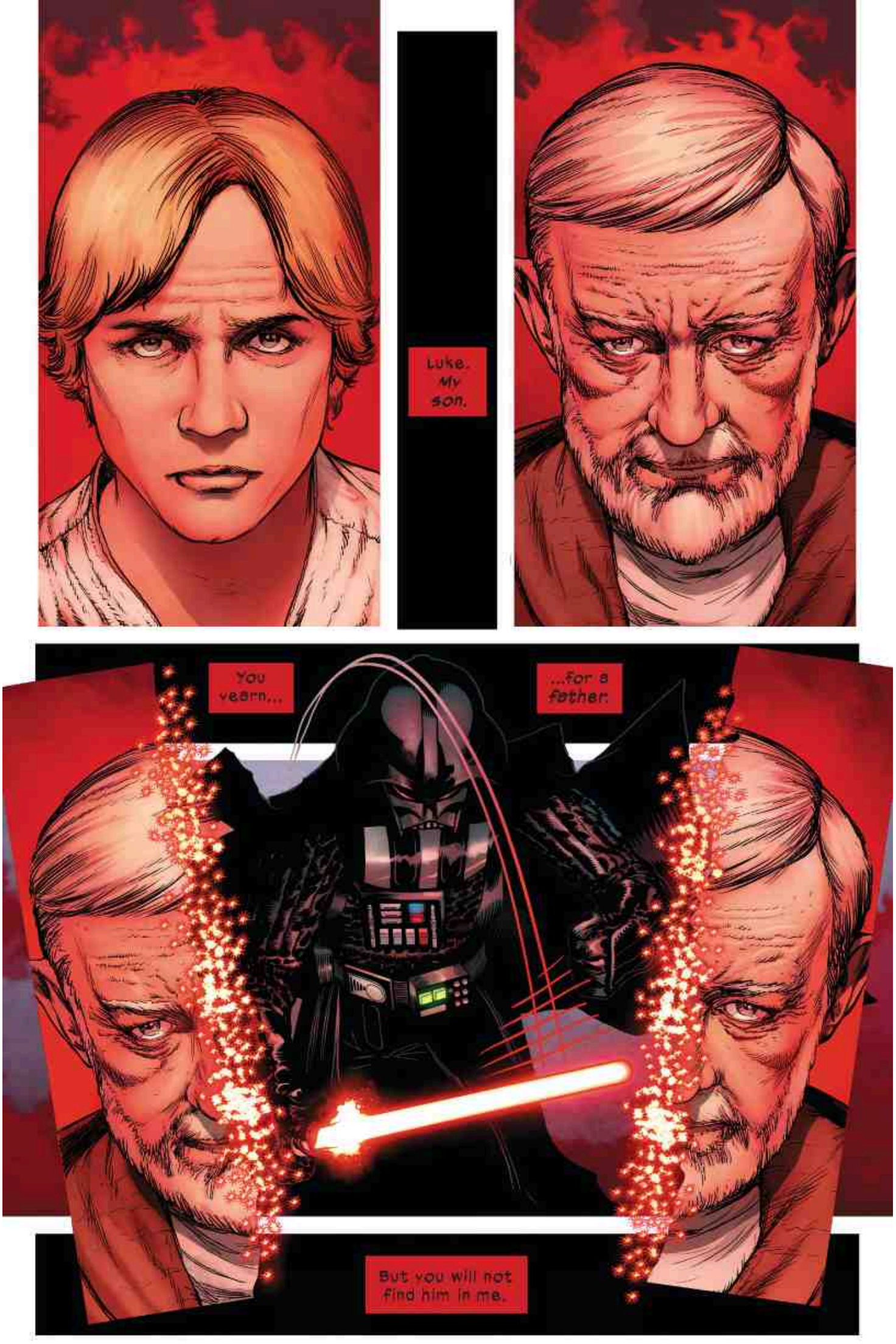
BUT YOU KNEW THAT, DIDN'T YOU?

I GET IT.
YOU WANTED TO SEE WHAT I'D DO.
HA,
YOU DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT ME, MY LORD.
VZZZZZZZZ
UNTIL YOU STRIKE...
...LIKE A COWARD IN THE DARK?
OH, NO, NO, NO.
WHAT YOU SEE IS WHAT YOU GET WITH OCHI OF BESTOON.
I'LL ALWAYS OBEY THE MOST POWERFUL.
SO AS LONG AS THAT'S REALLY YOU...

ALWAYS.
ZZZZZZZZZZZZ
HA HA!
BRRZZAAM
BRRZZAAM
BRRZZAAM
GAHK!



16 – TARGET SKYWALKER


Luke. My son.
You yearn...
...for a father.
But you will not find him in me.

So you cling to your *friends.*

As if you want to *disappear* in their company.

As if you could snuff out the *Force* within you...

...that still fills you with so much *fear.*

But *none* of us can escape who we *are*.

So if you refuse my offer...

...you will end up more lost than you can ever imagine.

So you will come to me.

NOW.

If you do not...

...I WILL CUT YOUR FRIEND IN HALF.
LORD VADER...
...YOU TOLD US TO ALLOW THAT REBEL X-WING TO APPROACH THE VERMILLION.
Jekara.
The Vermillion.
BUT NOW IT'S FLEEING.
YOUR ORDERS?
HA HA!
THE BOY FEARS YOU, MY LORD!
NO...
...BUT HE WILL.

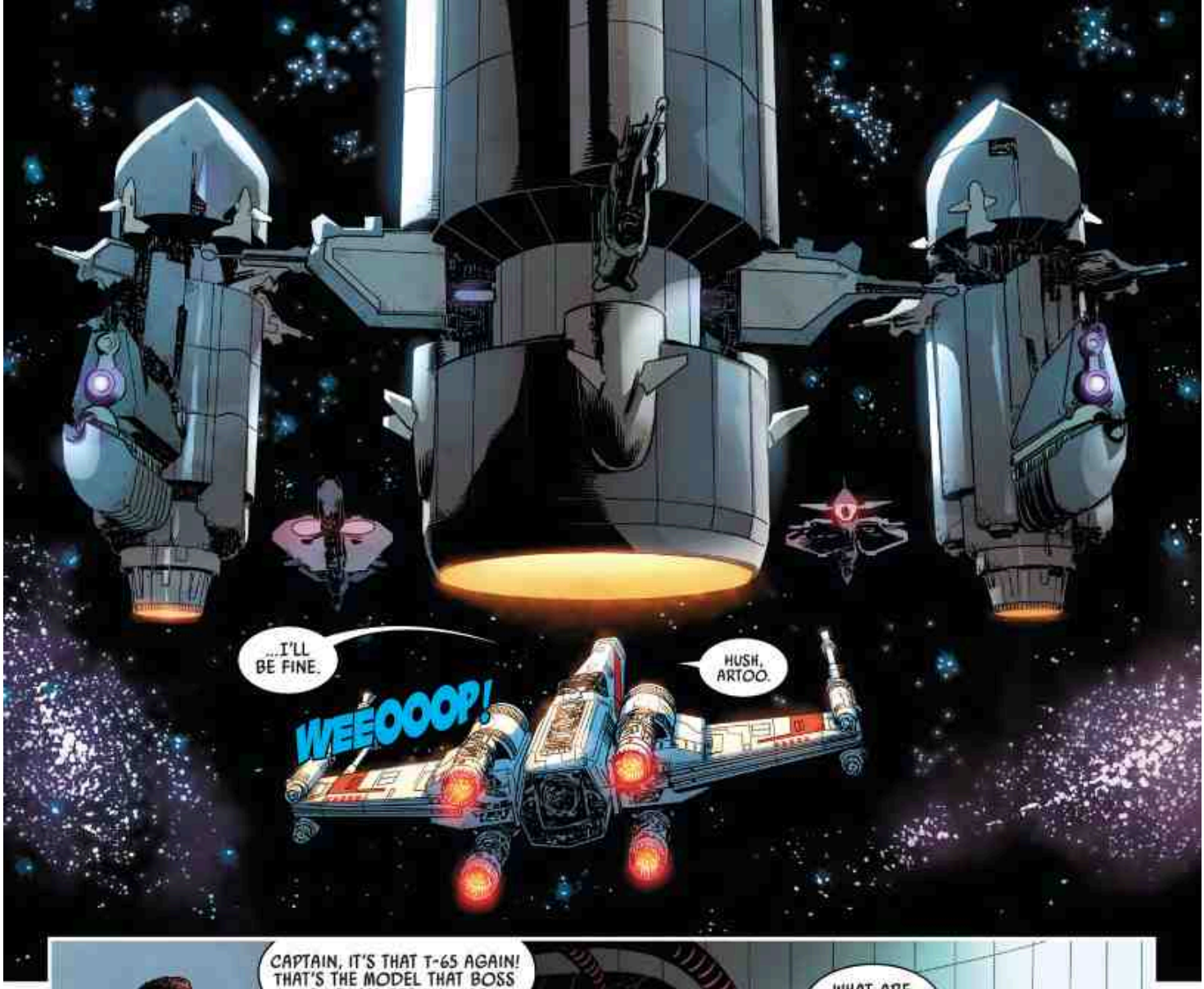
LUKE, IT'S LEIA AGAIN. PLEASE TELL ME WHAT'S GOING ON.
I'M NOT STRONG ENOUGH YET, LEIA...

...I CAN'T BEAT VADER ALONE.
AND IF I STAY AND FIGHT, HE'LL KILL ALL OF YOU.

SO IT'S FINE FOR HIM TO JUST KILL YOU?
HE WON'T DO THAT.
OH BOY.
YOU JUST SAID YOU'RE NOT STRONG ENOUGH--

LEIA...
...HE WANTS ME TO JOIN HIM.
THAT... MAKES THIS SOUND LIKE AN EVEN WORSE PLAN...

YOU'RE IN THE CLEAR, NOW, LEIA.
SAVE HAN...


...I'LL BE FINE.
WEEÉOOOP!
HUSH, ARTOO.

CAPTAIN, IT'S THAT T-65 AGAIN! THAT'S THE MODEL THAT BOSS ORORAB'S BEEN HUNGRY FOR!
AND IT'S WITHIN RANGE OF OUR MAGNA-HARPOONS!
WHAT ARE YOU WAITING FOR?

LET 'ER RIP!
FTOOOOOM
FTOOOOOM
FTOOOOOM

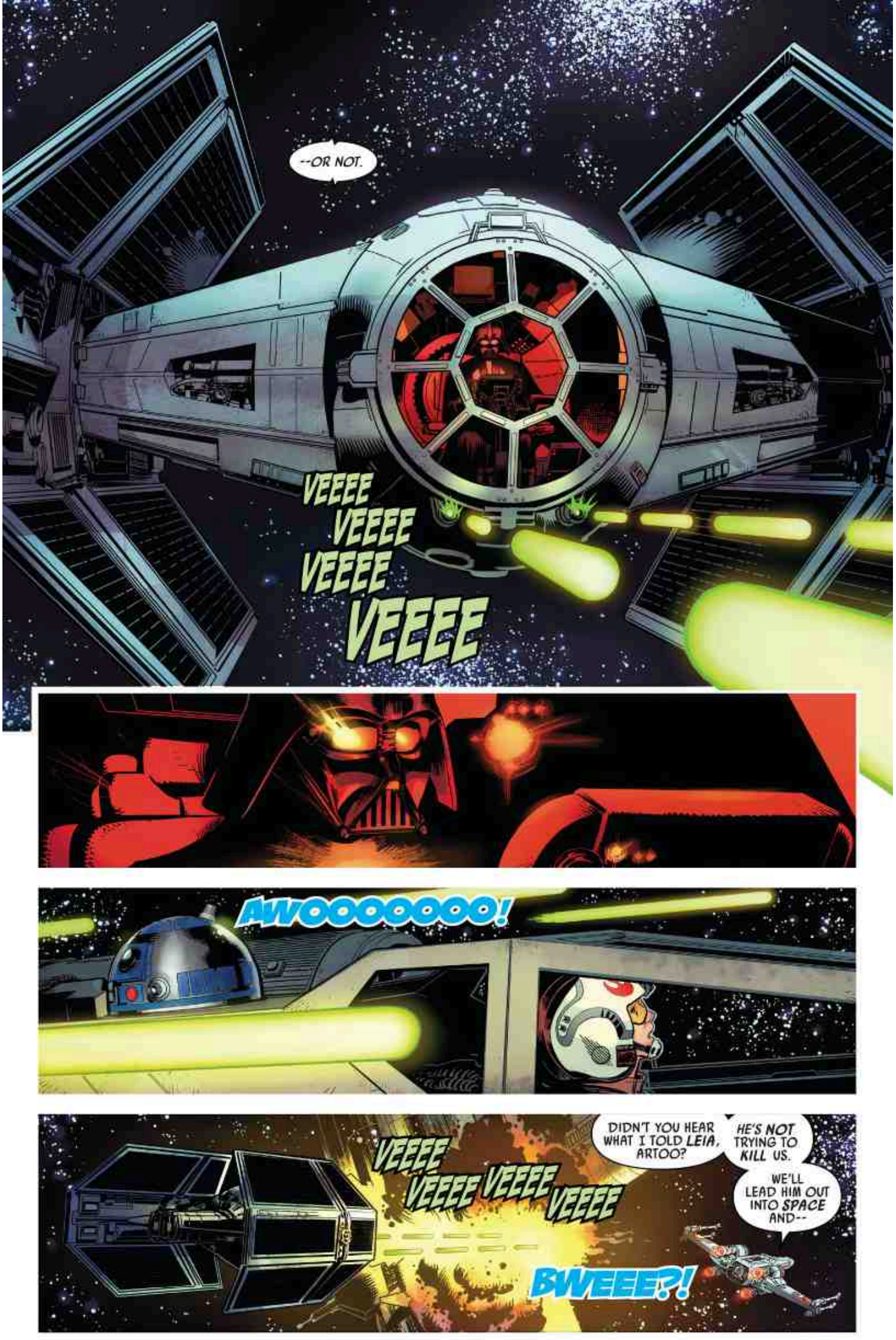
ZZIIIINGG

WEEEOOOOO
SIIIZZ
ZZZTTT
ARTOO! ARE YOU OKAY?

EEEEEE!
NO! THEY GOT US!

SKRRAAAKK
VEEEE VEEEE VEEEE

WHOA! LOOKS LIKE WE MIGHT HAVE A FRIEND OUT HERE--


--OR NOT.
VEEEE
VEEEE
VEEEE
VEEEE
AWOOOOOOO!
DIDN'T YOU HEAR WHAT I TOLD LEIA, ARTOO?
HE'S NOT TRYING TO KILL US.
WE'LL LEAD HIM OUT INTO SPACE AND--
VEEEE
VEEEE VEEEE
VEEEE
BWEEE?!

SKRAAAAK
OOOM
WEEOOO

WEEEEOOO?
I'M FINE!
HOW'S THE SHIP?
BLEEEOOO WEEEEROOOP BEEE OOO...!
OH NO.
VEEEE VEEEE VEEEE VEEEE
BRZZZAM BRZZAAAM
AAH!
FTOOOM FTOOOM

<THIS ISN'T WHAT WE AGREED UPON, OCHI!>*
<VADER WAS SUPPOSED TO SUPPORT MY BID FOR SOLO!>
<INSTEAD, HE'S STOLEN SOLO FOR HIMSELF!>
*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.

<YOU TOLD ME VADER KEEPS HIS WORD!>
IF I REMEMBER RIGHT, ALL MY LORD EVER PROMISED...
...WAS THAT YOU MIGHT GET WHAT YOU DESERVE.

IF YOU ASK ME, YOU'RE GETTING OFF PRETTY EASY.
<HOW-- HOW DARE-->
HOLD THAT THOUGHT, SLUG...

...I'VE GOT ANOTHER LOSER TO ATTEND TO RIGHT NOW.

LORD VADER, CAN YOU HEAR ME?

I DO NOT REQUIRE YOUR ASSISTANCE, ADMINISTRATOR MOORE.
DO NOT WORRY, LORD VADER...

...I'M NOT HELPING YOU.
HA HAAAAAA!
WE'VE TAGGED HIM, ADMINISTRATOR!
THANKS FOR THE DISTRACTION!
SKRAKAAAM
SKRAAKAAM
PERFECT.
I KNEW THE DROID CRUSH WOULD EVENTUALLY PROVE THEIR WORTH.

TRAITOR!
NEVER.
GAH!
CLAMP
BRZZZAAM
DON'T TELL ME I DIDN'T HEAR WHAT I HEARD!
YOU'RE TRYING TO KILL VADER!
I SERVE THE EMPIRE, OCHI.
WHICH MEANS I SERVE THE EMPEROR-- IN ALL THINGS, AT ALL TIMES.
YOU USED TO UNDERSTAND THAT.

WHO-- WHO ARE YOU?
STOP RIGHT THERE!
FTOOOM
FTOOOM
GAH!
VNNNN
I'M WARNING YOU!
CALM DOWN, BOY!
WE'RE HERE TO HELP.
WEEEEEOOOP!
WHAT?

VEEEE
VEEEE VEEEE
VEEEE

GAH!
SKRAKOW
PKAAANG

ALL FIXED! GET IN, BOY!
BVEEEEOOP!
WHO ARE YOU GUYS?

AND WHY ARE YOU HELPING ME?
WE JUST DO WHAT OUR CLIENTS TELL US.
SO DON'T THANK US...

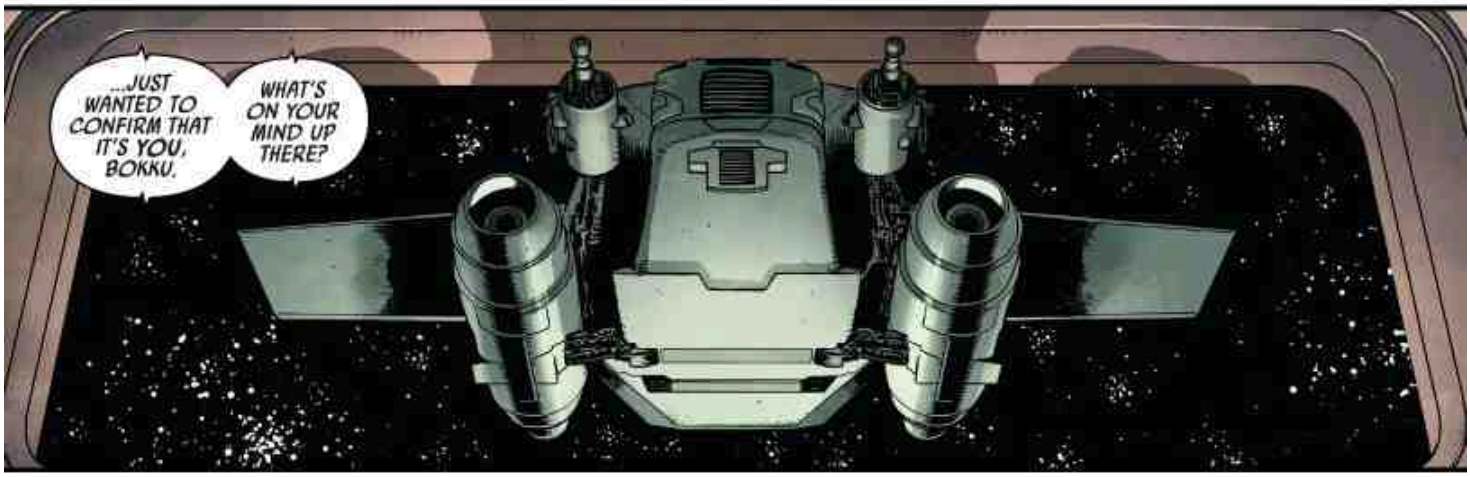
...THANK THE EMPIRE.
FWOOOOOSH

HOOOOO!
I KNOW, ARTOO...

BRRAAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
BRAKKA
...BUT WHATEVER IT TAKES!

CALL THEM OFF OR YOU'RE DEAD!
I THOUGHT YOU SAID LORD VADER COULD NOT BE BEATEN?
OH, THEY CAN'T BEAT HIM--
--BUT HE WANTS THAT REBEL.
YESSSs, HE DOES.
DO YOU KNOW WHY?
I DON'T ASK ABOUT WHAT I DON'T NEED TO KNOW.
FWUMMMP
HE FEARS THE BOY.
BECAUSE HE KNOWS THE BOY'S TRUE STRENGTH.
IF THE EMPEROR CLAIMED SKYWALKER...
SKLAANG
...WHAT NEED WOULD HE HAVE OF VADER?
OH, YOU'RE REALLY DEAD.

YOU STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND.
VADER CANNOT KILL ME WITHOUT BETRAYING THE EMPIRE.
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO BETRAYED THE EMPIRE!
NO. I TESTED ITS WEAKEST LINK.
AND FOUND IT LACKING.
IN YOUR FEAR, YOU WOULD DESTROY THE EMPEROR'S GREATEST WEAPON.
BUT YOU HAVE FAILED.
HEY, DON'T TRY THAT MIND THING ON ME. I'M NOT--
CHUKK
GAH!
NOW, IN YOUR FEAR, YOU WILL RETURN TO YOUR TRUE MASTER...
...HUMBLED.
LIKE ME.
JUST ANOTHER SERVANT IN HIS SHADOW.
FWOOOSSSH
WHAT...
THIS IS OCHI. DO YOU READ?
<WHAT DO YOU WANT, WORM?>
OH, NOTHING MUCH...


...JUST WANTED TO CONFIRM THAT IT'S YOU, BOKKU.
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND UP THERE?

<OH, I WOULDN'T WANT TO SPOIL THE SURPRISE.>

LORD VADER, THIS IS OCHI.
JUST A QUICK REPORT--
RIGHT. WORKING ON THAT--
THE UMBARAN. I KNOW.
KILL HER.

--BUT THE HUTTS ARE AFTER THE IMPERIAL SHUTTLE THAT'S GOT SOLO!
VEEEE
VEEEE
VEEEE

My son.

I sense your anguish.

You still cannot bear the thought of losing your friends.

Good.

Now you're ready...

...to learn what real fear is.

17 – JUST REWARDS

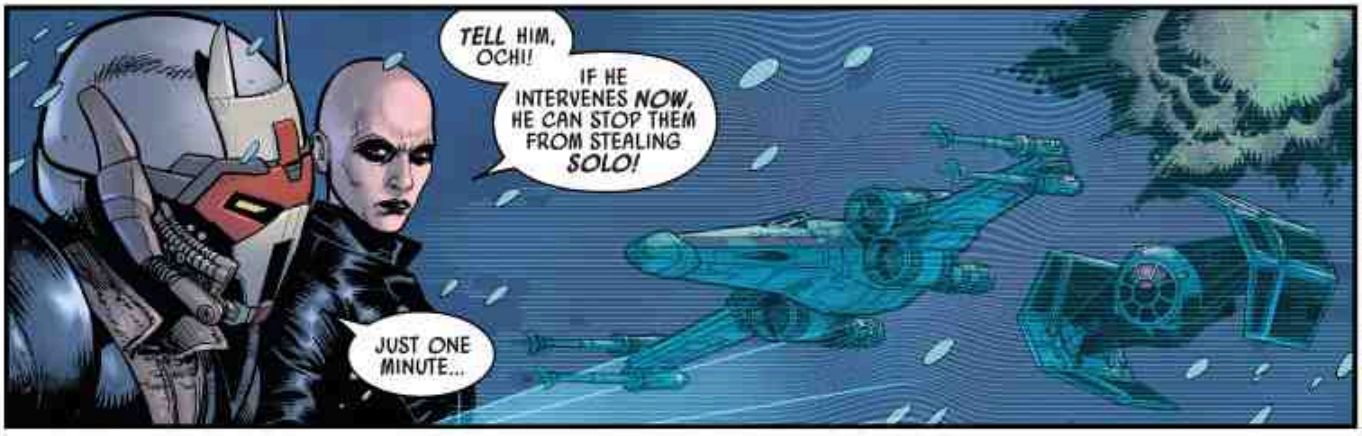
Jekara.
STOP, OCHI! WE'RE ON THE SAME SIDE!
NICE TRY, UMBARAN! VADER SAYS TO KILL YOU, SO I'M KILLING YOU!
I'M NOT THE PROBLEM HERE, YOU FOOL!
THE HUTTS ARE TRYING TO STEAL SOLO!
DO YOU THINK YOUR MASTER WANTS THAT?
LOOK!
CLICK
WE ALL SAW LORD VADER TAKE SOLO FROM JABBA.
I CAN'T IMAGINE HE'D WANT YOU TO SQUABBLE DOWN HERE IN THE SNOW WHILE THE HUTTS TAKE HIM BACK.
HUH...

LORD VADER, DID YOU CATCH ALL THAT?
LORD VADER?
SIR, I'M INTERCEPTING TRANSMISSIONS FROM OCHI OF BESTOON!

HE'S INFORMED LORD VADER OF OUR ACTIONS...
...BUT VADER ISN'T RESPONDING!

<HA, HA, HA! IS HE STILL CHASING THAT REBEL X-WING?>*
UNCLEAR. WE'VE LOST--
OH, WAIT...
*TRANSLATED FROM HUTTESE.

"...THERE HE IS!"


TELL HIM, OCHI!
IF HE INTERVENES NOW, HE CAN STOP THEM FROM STEALING SOLO!
JUST ONE MINUTE...

...HE ONLY WANTED SOLO AS BAIT FOR THE SKYWALKER BOY.
SO WHY DISTRACT HIM WHEN HE'S ABOUT TO KILL THE KID ON HIS OWN?
YOU'RE JUST TRYING TO PROTECT SKYWALKER AGAIN, AREN'T YOU, UMBARAN?
AS ALWAYS, I SERVE THE EMPEROR, OCHI.
YEAH, SURE. TELL YOU WHAT...
...WE'LL LET THE EXECUTOR'S TIES TAKE CARE OF SOLO.
WE'RE JUST TALKING ABOUT HUTTS HERE, AFTER ALL.
WHAT DO WE REALLY THINK THEY CAN DO AGAINST THE POWER OF THE EMPIRE?
<BOKKU, NO!>
<FOR THE GLORY OF THE CLANS...>
<BOKKU, NO!>

"<...DESTROY THE IMPERIAL FLAGSHIP!>"
LORD VADER! THIS IS ADMIRAL PIETT!
I JUST FINISHED SPEAKING WITH THE EMPEROR. I APPRAISED HIM OF THE SITUATION HERE, OF THE HUTT ATTACK.
SKRAAAKKK
GAH!
INSTEAD OF USING THE EXECUTOR TO ERADICATE THE HUTT ARMADA, HE HAS ORDERED YOU TO END THE INSURRECTION...
...PERSONALLY.
HNN.

You know you cannot escape me, my son.

But today you will.

Because my master has shown his hand.

He wants you alive.

So it will have to be enough to know your fear.

But even better...

...to measure his.

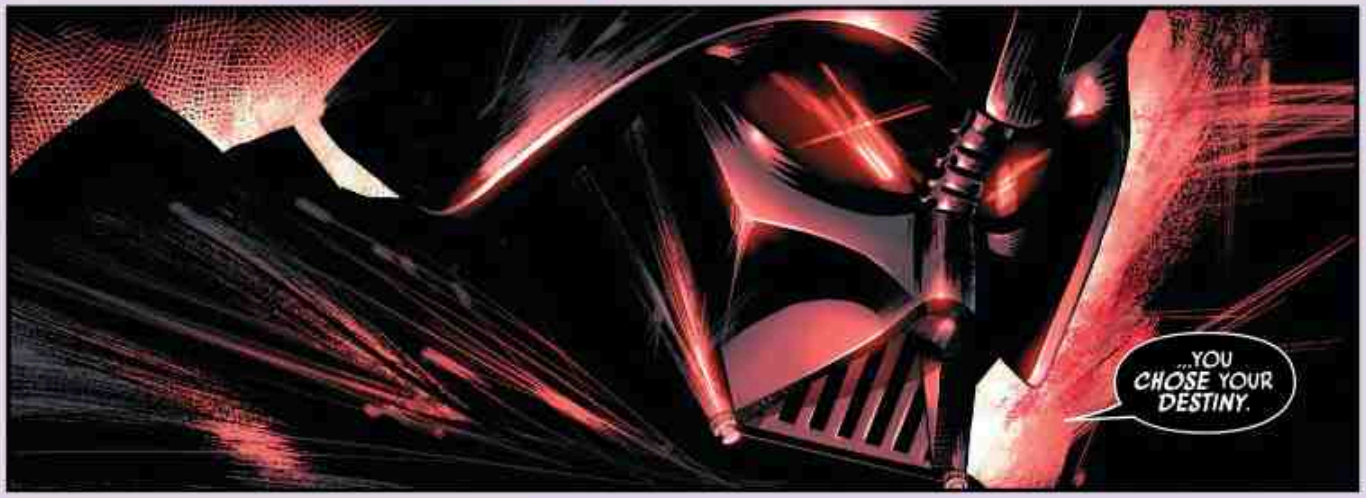
GAAAAHKK!
VNNNNN
The Hutt Flagship.
<LORD VADER! LET'S BE REASONABLE HERE!>

<I DID EVERYTHING YOU ASKED!>
<STUCK MY NECK OUT FOR YOU! BID AGAINST JABBA FOR SOLO!>
<AND YOU HUMILIATED ME!>
YOUR PRIDE IS NOT MY CONCERN, BOKKU.

VNNNNNNNNNN
<BUT WE HAD AN AGREEMENT!>
WHICH YOU WERE ALWAYS GOING TO BREAK...
<NO--?>
YES...

...FROM THE BEGINNING.
YOU HESITATED WHEN THE DROID CRUSH ATTACKED ME ON ZEE-NINE CITY SEVEN.

THAT WAS THE MOMENT...
SKLAAANGG


...YOU CHOSE YOUR DESTINY.

<OH, I ASSURE YOU...>
<...I CHOSE IT MUCH EARLIER...>

<...WHEN I JOINED CRIMSON DAWN.>

YOU...

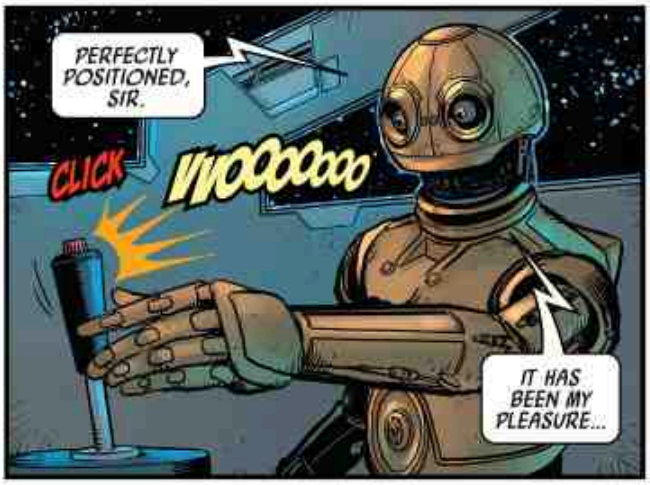
HE'S ACTUALLY SURPRISED!
HOW DELIGHTFUL!

YOU'VE CHOSEN...
...FOOLISHLY.
<WHY? BECAUSE I'LL DIE? YOU JUST SAID YOU WERE ALWAYS GOING TO KILL ME ANYWAY.>

<IN A GALAXY OF EMPERORS AND WIZARDS, THERE'S NO WAY FOR LOWLY SOULS LIKE US TO WIN THIS GAME.>
<UNLESS WE STAND TOGETHER.>
YOU STOOD TOGETHER, AND STILL...

...YOU DIE.

<BUT SO DO YOU.>
<GAK, ARE WE--?>


PERFECTLY POSITIONED, SIR.
CLICK
VVOOOOOOO
IT HAS BEEN MY PLEASURE...

...TO BRING THE DAWN.
NO!

SKRAAK
HA, HA, HA, HA!

<TOO LATE.>

FRAAKOOOOOM

KTHOOOM
KTHOOOOM
KTHOOOM
FSSSSSSSSS
VNNNNNNN

SURPRISED TO SEE YOU HERE, GRAND VIZIER.
AND I'M EQUALLY SURPRISED...
...TO SEE SUB-ADMINISTRATOR MOORE IN MANACLES.
SHE CONSPIRED TO HELP SKYWALKER ESCAPE.
VADER MEANT TO KILL THE BOY!
BUT THE EMPEROR WANTED HIM ALIVE!
HM.
AND WHAT OF CRIMSON DAWN?
AND THE REBELS?
SHOULD YOU NOT FIRST ASK...

...WHAT OF LORD VADER?

YOU MADE IT!

I KNEW HE'D MAKE IT!
YOU MIGHT HAVE DOUBTED, BUT I NEVER DID!

THE QUESTION STILL STANDS.
SUB-ADMINISTRATOR?
LADY QI'RA AND HER CRIMSON DAWN COHORT DEPARTED IN THE VERMILLION, AND NO ONE YET KNOWS THE FULL EXTENT OF THEIR SCHEMES.
AND SOLO HAS VANISHED.
SO, LORD VADER...

...YOU HAVE LOST BOTH THE FISH...
...AND THE BAIT.

SKYWALKER FLED.
IN WEAKNESS AND FEAR.
HE IS NOT WHO THE EMPEROR BELIEVED HE COULD BE.
AND YET HE HAS HIS FREEDOM...
...AND STILL HE FIGHTS.
THE BOY HAS HOPE.
UKK!
HNNGAAKK!
BUT HOPE IS NOT ENOUGH.
HA, HA, HA, HA!

SO YOU ARE TRULY WITH US AGAIN, LORD VADER?

AAHHKK...
MY MASTER.

AH. IT IS REASSURING TO HEAR THAT WORD...
...WHEN SO MANY MISGUIDED FOOLS NOW SEEM TO THINK THAT A MILLION ARE STRONGER THAN ONE.
HAVE YOU NOT FOUND THAT THOUGHT... TEMPTING?

MASTER... I SERVE ONLY--
ENOUGH.

CRIMSON DAWN HAS BARELY SHOWN ITS STRENGTH.
TO GET THIS FAR, IT MUST HAVE AGENTS AT EVERY LEVEL THROUGHOUT THE EMPIRE.
FIND THESE INFILTRATORS, LORD VADER...

...AND SHOW THEM WHO IS STRONGER.

HEH, HEH!
I WARNED YOU.
AND YET I STILL *LIVE*.
THE *EMPEROR* KNOWS THE *VALUE* OF MY SERVICE.
OR *PERHAPS*, SUB-ADMINISTRATOR...
...YOU AREN'T *IMPORTANT* ENOUGH FOR HIM TO EVEN *NOTICE*.

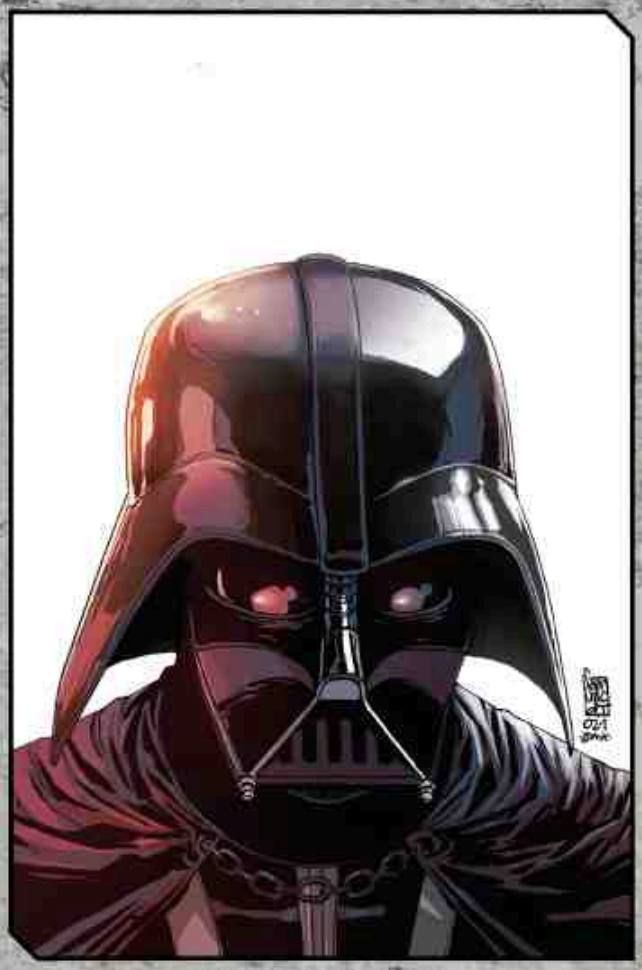
ATTENTION!
GENERAL ROMODI, REPORTING FOR DUTY, LORD VADER.
BY ORDER OF THE EMPEROR, I PRESENT YOU WITH ALL THE TROOPS YOU WILL NEED TO DESTROY CRIMSON DAWN.
WELL, ISN'T THAT NICE.
BUT WE MIGHT NEED A MORE SUBTLE APPROACH.
WHAT'S THE PLAN, MY LORD?
BEFORE YOU ENTERED THE EMPEROR'S SERVICE, YOU WERE AN ASSASSIN.
OH, YES. STILL AM. CREDENTIALED BY THE LEAGUE.
GO TO THIS LEAGUE AND TELL THEM...

"...THEY NOW SERVE ME."
Saki.
OCHI. IT'S BEEN TOO LONG.
REALLY? I NEVER REALLY FEEL COMFORTABLE IN THE PRESENCE OF ANOTHER MASTER ASSASSIN.
MUCH LESS THREE.
HA, HA! TRUE ENOUGH.
BUT THESE ARE STRANGE TIMES.
WE HEAR VADER'S GOT AN ARMY.
AND HE'S ABOUT TO POINT IT AT ALL THE DARK CORNERS THE EMPIRE'S LEFT ALONE UP 'TIL NOW.
NOTHING TO FEAR IF YOU'RE NOT CRIMSON DAWN.
WE HEARD THAT TOO.
SO JUST TO MAKE SURE WE'RE ALL GOOD...
...WE HAVE A GIFT.
A GIFT?
WELL, WE BETTER TAKE A LOOK AT THIS, HUH?
TOOK US A WHILE TO SECURE.
BUT I THINK YOU'RE GONNA APPRECIATE IT.

WHA--
QI'RA!
OCHI. MY REGARDS TO YOU AND YOUR MASTER.
YOU GUYS ACTUALLY CAUGHT THE LEADER OF CRIMSON DAWN?
IT WASN'T EASY.
BUT WE ARE THE BEST.
ANYONE ELSE KNOW ABOUT THIS?
YOU KIDDING?
IT WAS US AND ONLY US.
AND TO US ONLY GO THE REWARDS, RIGHT?
ABSOLUTELY.
BRZZZAM
BRZZAAAM
CLICK

A MILLION STRONGER THAN ONE.
A MILLION STRONGER THAN ONE.
To be continued!

#13 Pride Variant by
JJ KIRBY



#14 Headshot Variant by
GIUSEPPE CAMUNCOLI & FRANK MARTIN

#15 Variant by
DAVID NAKAYAMA

#16 Blueprint Variant by
PAOLO VILLANELLI & MATTIA IACONO

STAR WARS

WAR OF THE BOUNTY HUNTERS

DARTH VADER

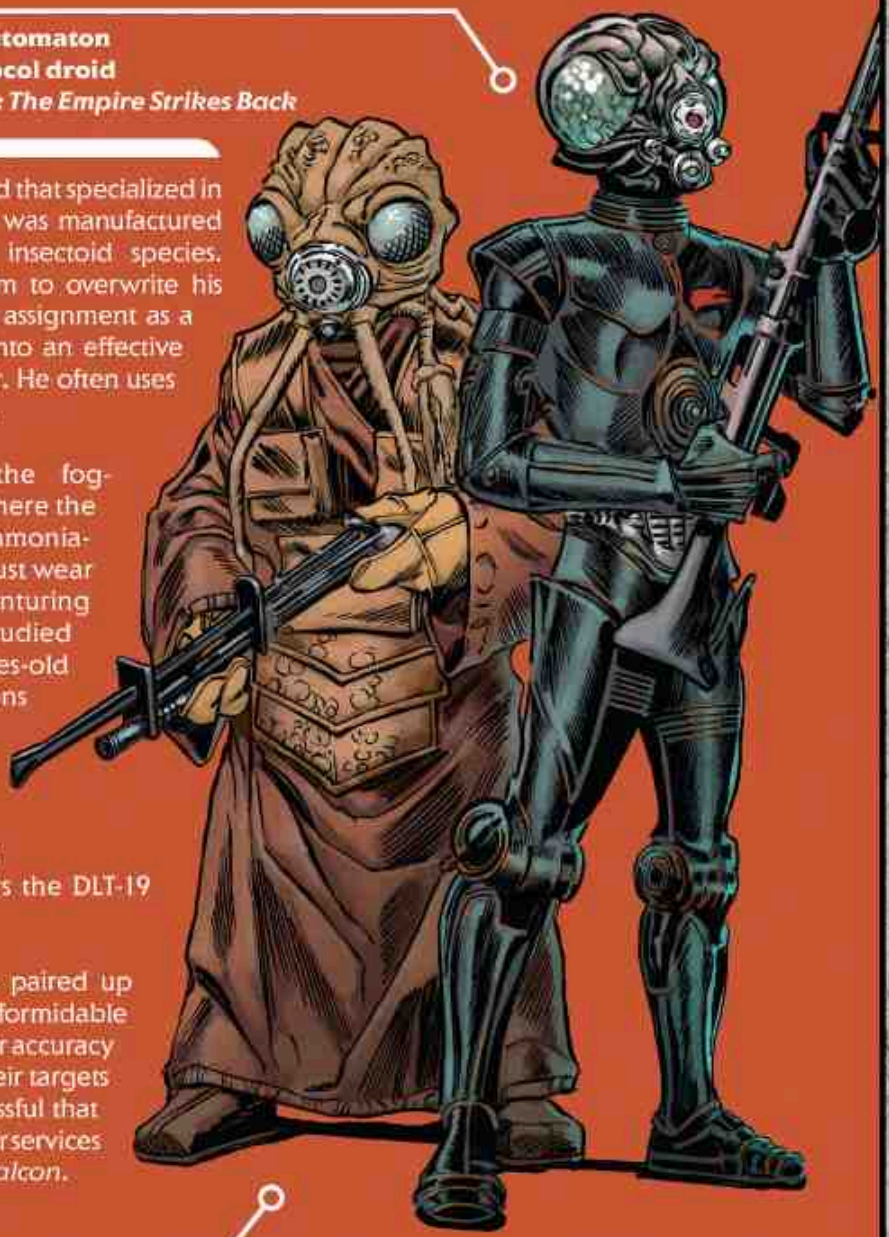
4-LOM

Homeworld: **Industrial Automaton**
Species: **LOM-series protocol droid**
First Apperance: ***Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back***

4-LOM was a protocol droid that specialized in millions of languages. He was manufactured for the employment of insectoid species. A logic glitch allowed him to overwrite his programming, escape his assignment as a translator and transform into an effective and precise bounty hunter. He often uses a DLT-19 Heavy Blaster rifle.

Zuckuss comes from the fog-shrouded planet Gand where the inhabitants breathe an ammonia-based atmosphere. He must wear a respirator when adventuring offworld. Zuckuss has studied and mastered centuries-old mystic Findsman traditions and seemingly possesses a sixth sense making him one of the most unique and effective trackers in the galaxy. He also favors the DLT-19 Heavy Blaster rifle.

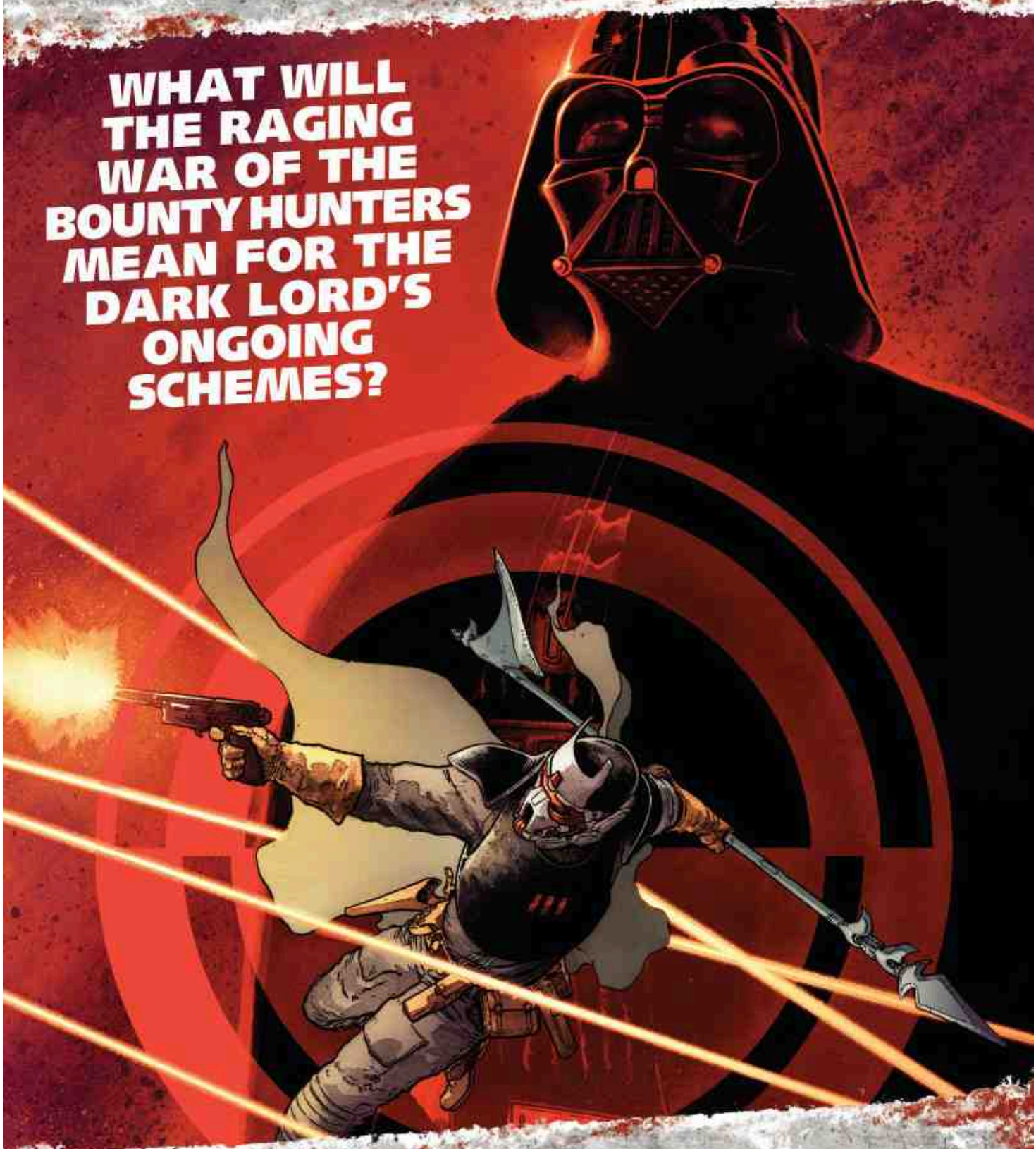
4-LOM and Zuckuss have paired up many times, becoming a formidable bounty hunting team. Their accuracy and speed in capturing their targets have made them so successful that Darth Vader employed their services to locate the *Millennium Falcon*.



ZUCKUSS

Homeworld: **Gand**
Species: **Gand**
First Apperance: ***Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back***

#17 Hoodbook Variant by
RON FRENZ, TOM PALMER & **NOLAN WOODARD** WITH **CARLOS LAO**



"Vader is tested and betrayed in turn, but is out in full strength and full determination."
— Comic Crusaders

RETURNED TO THE FOLD after his rebellion against the Emperor, Darth Vader faces the horrors of reconstruction in the secret laboratories of Coruscant. As he blacks out under the knife, does the Dark Lord of the Sith still dream of revenge against his master? Or do his thoughts drift toward his son...and the friends who make Luke Skywalker so vulnerable? Don't miss this next critical new chapter in Darth Vader's ongoing evolution — featuring the revelation of the first time that Vader learned the name Han Solo! As Vader and Ochi of Bestoon embark upon a search for Solo's carbonite-frozen body, who is the Umbaran? And what happens happens when she emerges from the darkness?

Collecting ***Star Wars: Darth Vader #12-17*** — by Greg Pak, Raffaele Ienco, Gulu Vilanova, Jason Keith, Dean White and Giada Marchisio.

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